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Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

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14 March, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A new report suggests that jogging could be bad for your health, especially if you do it alone. A team of researchers from Harvard University has said that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as people believe. Their research showed that jogging as part of a group is healthier. The experiments they did on rats showed that running alone raises stress levels and slows down brain cell growth. Professor Elizabeth Gould, the research leader, said: "These results suggest that, [with no] social interaction, a normally [positive] experience can [have a negative] influence on the brain."

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise wheels. One group exercised alone, the other group were part of a rodent jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists did tests to measure the new brain cell growth in all of the rats. The results showed that the team joggers had double the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "In a group setting, running stimulates [brain cell growth]. However, when running...in social isolation, these positive effects [decrease]." Human joggers should remember that running is healthier than the rat race.

WARM-UPS

1. ALONE: Write down five things you love doing alone and five things you love doing with other people. Share what you wrote down with your partner(s). Did they think the same as you?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Jogging / health / doing things alone / Harvard University / group work / rats / brain cells / influences / exercise / wheels / growth / social isolation / the rat race

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. SOLO ACTIVITIES: With your partner(s), talk about whether the activities in the list below are better done alone or with other people.

- Jogging
- Traveling around the world
- Studying English
- Praying
- Eating
- Swimming
- Watching a movie
- Reading a newspaper
- Playing computer games
- Shopping

4. HEADLINE PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use all of the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and compare your different versions. Who was closest to the real story?

5. JOGGING: Do you agree with the following opinions about jogging? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Everyone should jog.
- b. Jogging is boring.
- c. Jogging is easily the best form of exercise there is.
- d. Jogging is very bad for the knees and ankles.
- e. Jogging in the city is very unhealthy and should be avoided at all costs.
- f. It's more fun to jog in a group than jog alone.
- g. Jogging is what sports teachers make you do when they don't like you.
- h. Jogging is just a fancy name for running – there's no difference.

6. EXERCISE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "exercise". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A new report says jogging could be bad for your health. | T / F |
| b. Jogging with other people may be healthier than running alone. | T / F |
| c. The brain cell growth of rats went down when they ran alone. | T / F |
| d. A professor said social interaction while running is good for the brain. | T / F |
| e. A research team studied groups of rats running on exercise wheels. | T / F |
| f. Rats who ran with other rats doubled their brainpower. | T / F |
| g. In a group setting, running stimulates brain growth. | T / F |
| h. For rats, jogging is healthier than racing. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| a. suggests | observed |
| b. believe | reduces |
| c. raises | nine to five |
| d. slows down | think |
| e. influence | twice |
| f. monitored | impact |
| g. rodent | shows |
| h. double | rat |
| i. stimulates | increases |
| j. rat race | triggers |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. A new report suggests that jogging | of a group is healthier |
| b. not as healthy | team |
| c. jogging as part | influence on the brain |
| d. running alone raises | two groups of rats |
| e. have a negative | the new brain cell growth |
| f. The researchers monitored | could be bad for your health |
| g. part of a rodent jogging | than the rat race |
| h. scientists did tests to measure | stress levels |
| i. double the amount | as people believe |
| j. running is healthier | of new brain cells |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A new report _____ that jogging could be _____ for your health, especially if you do it alone. A _____ of researchers from Harvard University has said that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as people _____. Their research showed that jogging as part of a group is healthier. The experiments they did on rats showed that running alone _____ stress levels and slows down brain cell _____. Professor Elizabeth Gould, the research leader, said: "These results suggest that, [with no] _____ interaction, a normally [positive] experience can [have a negative] influence on the _____."

growth

team

brain

suggests

believe

raises

bad

social

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on _____ wheels. One group exercised alone, the other group were part of a _____ jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists did _____ to measure the new brain cell growth in all of the rats. The results showed that the team joggers had _____ the amount of new brain cells as the _____ runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "In a group setting, running _____ [brain cell growth]. However, when running...in social isolation, these positive effects [decrease]." Human joggers should _____ that running is healthier than the rat _____.

stimulates

double

race

exercise

remember

rodent

solo

tests

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A new report _____ that jogging could be bad for your health, especially if you do it alone. A team of researchers from Harvard University has said that _____ for a run on your own is not as healthy as people _____. Their research showed that jogging as part of a group is healthier. The experiments they did on rats showed that running alone _____ stress levels and slows down brain cell growth. Professor Elizabeth Gould, the research leader, said: "These results _____ that, [with no] social interaction, a normally [positive] experience can [have a negative] _____ on the brain."

The researchers _____ two groups of rats on exercise wheels. One group exercised alone, the other group were part of a _____ jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists did tests to _____ the new brain cell growth in all of the rats. The results showed that the team joggers had double the _____ of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "In a group setting, running _____ [brain cell growth]. However, when running...in social _____, these positive effects [decrease]." Human joggers should remember that running is healthier than the rat _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'brain' and 'cell'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "JOGGING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about jogging.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • bad | • wheels |
| • own | • team |
| • group | • double |
| • raises | • stimulates |
| • leader | • social |
| • influence | • race |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of jogging?
- c. Is jogging popular in your country?
- d. What are your experiences of jogging or running?
- e. Do you think jogging can be bad for you?
- f. Do you agree with the conclusion of the professor in the article?
- g. Are you interested in reading articles about jogging?
- h. Do you think you can link experiments where rats run on exercise wheels to real people jogging?
- i. What do you think of rats and experiments on rats?
- j. Do you think you are part of the rat race?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think the best form of exercise is?
- d. Do you prefer to do things alone or with other people?
- e. Are you a team member or a soloist?
- f. Do you think science will benefit from the study mentioned in the article?
- g. What kinds of things do you think increase your brain cells?
- h. What questions would you like to ask the professor who conducted the research into jogging rodents?
- i. What do you think her answers would be?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SOLO: In pairs / groups, talk about the plus points and minus points of doing the following activities alone:

Activity	Plus points	Minus points
1. Shopping		
2. Traveling"		
3. Studying English		
4. Hiking		
5. Swimming		
6. Watching a movie		

Change partners and talk about what you wrote with your previous partner(s).

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find some health reports on the effects (positive and negative) of jogging. Talk about this with your partner(s).

3. EXPERIMENT: Design an experiment you would like to make about human activity. Show your design to your classmates in the next lesson. Which design(s) did you like most and why?

4. EXERCISE DIARY: Write a diary entry for a day in your life. Note down all of the examples of exercise you get – walking, working, taking a shower etc. How many calories do you think you burn with each activity? Who had the most active day?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. T d. T e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. suggests	shows
b. believe	think
c. raises	increases
d. slows down	reduces
e. influence	impact
f. monitored	observed
g. rodent	rat
h. double	twice
i. stimulates	triggers
j. rat race	nine to five

PHRASE MATCH:

a. A new report suggests that jogging	could be bad for your health
b. not as healthy	as people believe
c. jogging as part	of a group is healthier
d. running alone raises	stress levels
e. have a negative	influence on the brain
f. The researchers monitored	the new brain cell growth
g. part of a rodent jogging	team
h. scientists did tests to measure	two groups of rats
i. double the amount	of new brain cells
j. running is healthier	than the rat race

GAP FILL:

Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A new report **suggests** that jogging could be **bad** for your health, especially if you do it alone. A **team** of researchers from Harvard University has said that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as people **believe**. Their research showed that jogging as part of a group is healthier. The experiments they did on rats showed that running alone **raises** stress levels and slows down brain cell **growth**. Professor Elizabeth Gould, the research leader, said: "These results suggest that, [with no] **social** interaction, a normally [positive] experience can [have a negative] influence on the **brain**."

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on **exercise** wheels. One group exercised alone, the other group were part of a **rodent** jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists did **tests** to measure the new brain cell growth in all of the rats. The results showed that the team joggers had **double** the amount of new brain cells as the **solo** runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "In a group setting, running **stimulates** [brain cell growth]. However, when running...in social isolation, these positive effects [decrease]." Human joggers should **remember** that running is healthier than the rat **race**.