

**Mental exercise**

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## **Mental exercise**

Our minds are like muscles. if you use it, it strengthens. Most agree with this sentiment. However, most don't truly understand what it means to exercise your mind.

When one imagines intellectual exercise, one thinks of the library as a gym for the brain or believes that researching and studying is how one strengthens themselves mentally. However, this is wrong.

True mental exercise comes not from memorizing facts or learning some new theory or formula. But instead is from abstract thinking and pondering of concepts. Imagination is the true gym of the mind, study, and research are but simple uses of the mind but not its strengtheners.

## **Imagination**

Think of how much mental development you have achieved in the past 5 years of your life. It could be a great deal or very little, but it is almost certainly far less than what you achieved between the ages of 0-5. I propose this is due to the fact that young children engage in far more intellectual exercise due to their reliance on imagination to explain the world.

Imagine these two scenarios. A 25-year-old wishes to understand why it rains. He goes onto Wikipedia and reads an article on it and that is it. He now knows the scientific reasoning behind rain. He learned a new fact

The second scenario: A 5-year-old wishes to understand why it rains, so he imagines possible reasons for why it rains. First he considers that rain looks a lot like tears so he comes to the conclusion that rain is clouds crying. Or maybe he considers that water is blue and so is the sky, therefore rain is the sky melting. The 5 old

Is of course not factually correct but by imagining possible reasons for why it rained. He exercised his mind, he drew connections and improve his ability to connect information and to draw his own conclusions from his own thoughts and ideas.

Young children constantly go through this exact process practically every day. They exercise their minds so commonly and consistently they are able to mentally develop incredibly fast. The more we rely on research and study, the fewer opportunities we get to exercise our minds in this way. This is why we develop so much slower now than we did between the ages of 1-10

### **Erm source?!?**

Arguments based on sources are the exact opposite of this type of mental exercise. For they are fundamentally offloading your thinking to be done by some egghead at Harvard. You haven't exercised a single thought, you haven't come up with a single idea yourself. It is an overreliance on sources and studies that result in bugmenification, the process in which a person loses any independent or organic parts of themselves and are just echoes of their dominant culture/environment. To quote a source is to just echo what someone else has thought about.

This isn't to say that the use of sources doesn't have its place. If you're trying to prove a scientific fact or are in a research field, it makes sense to use sources. I'm not arguing that using sources at all is unacceptable. Instead, I am saying that it is having someone else do your thinking for you. Feel free to use sources whenever you please, just please do try to do some mental exercise as well.

### **Adult Mental exercise**

Of course, organic mental exercise becomes much more difficult for us as we age. We can't really just ponder how rain works over and over again. We built up a collection of empirical facts as we get older and so the opportunities for us to wonder about how nature works decrease.

In response to this problem, I suggest that we should pursue writing essays in which we ponder higher abstract concepts and then write down our ideas. It is important however that when you do this, to not just write what someone else has said or thought about as this defeats the entire point.

Open up a document and just think about something, like what animals on other planets might look like, or the beauty of something you love. It doesn't need to be something profound. Just think and write, and this will be your mental exercise.

This very paper is an example of this process. As are all other essays in this server.

I encourage you to consider this, and please do try it.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things"

Philippians 4:8