



TBH Focus

Body | *Move It*

- Aerobic exercise boosts the brain's physical health, sharpens intellectual performance, and has been shown to lower dementia risk.
- Regular aerobic activity may contribute to the building of a protective buffer against memory loss, often referred to as "metabolic reserve."
- Keeping physically fit helps prevent obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic conditions that in turn can increase dementia risk.

The TBH Science

A simple game of catch can boost brain health in a variety of ways. First, keeping a ball or other object in the air calls on physical skills that require tapping the talents of our grey matter, including hand-eye coordination and quick reaction time. And once the ball gets rolling (or tossing) nonstop, the activity can become an aerobic one, which research has found to be as beneficial for the brain as it is for heart-lung function, muscle strength, and bone health: An analysis of 18 different studies of the effects of exercise on the brain revealed that regular aerobic activity improved several aspects of cognitive function, including memory, attention, and executive function (how the brain oversees tasks like planning, organizing, and problem solving). In another study, a daily dose of exercise lowered the risk of Alzheimer's disease in older people over the span of four years. Aerobic exercise also helps to control chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension that can increase the risk of brain-related problems.

You Will Need

- Toss-able objects, such as scarves, small foam or tennis balls, small beanbags, small cowboy hats(see Resources)



- Introduce the activity. Use the TBH Focus and the TBH Science to explain throwing and catching hones hand-eye coordination and reaction time, and also can be an aerobic activity that improves brain health.
 - Use the “It’s a Toss Up” games worksheet to introduce and plan various brain-boosting coordination games.
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- Introduce the activity. Use the TBH Focus and the TBH Science to explain throwing and catching hones hand-eye coordination and reaction time, and also can be an aerobic activity that improves brain health.
 - Let each person practice tossing a scarf into the air and catching it.
 - Have group form a circle (participants can sit or stand depending on energy levels and balancing abilities). Toss a ball to one person, who will immediately toss it to someone else. That person should throw it to another person, and so on. If it seems necessary, have each person call out the name of whomever he or she is going to toss to.
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Channel your inner Tom Seaver (voted best pitcher of all time by the National Baseball Hall of Fame) and toss a ball around—any kind of ball. Whether you actually slip on a leather glove and play catch with one of the kids in your life or engage a pal or partner in a simple back-and-forth with a tennis ball, you’ll hone your hand-eye coordination, speed up your reaction time, and get an aerobic workout (as long as you keep the ball going non-stop)—all of which will earn you a healthier brain.



Resources

See the Resources section of your online Toolkit for all worksheets, links, and additional materials for this activity.