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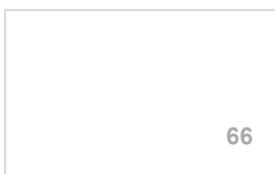
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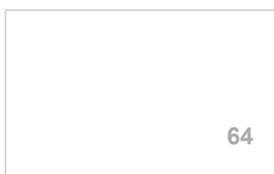
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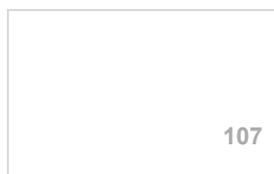
66

Charles Dickens' Novels: Too Long For Kids Today?



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Autistic Students' Crayons Dipped in Hot Sauce

Are Sports the New Prescription for Kids with ADHD?

by [Molly Conley](#) | January 24, 2011 | 2:30 pm

57 comments



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The same week that The New York Times extoles the importance of child's play, an article in [The Huffington Post](#) by [Dr Jay P. Granat](#) suggests that participation in athletics could curb symptoms of ADHD.

A National Problem

Dr. Granat cites some impressive statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to the CDC:

- Almost 1 in 10 American children are now being diagnosed with ADHD.
- Nearly 5.5 million children in the United States have now been found to have the disorder; that's an increase of about 1 million in recent years.

According to Dr. Granat:

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Identifying the Causes of ADHD

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1 of 3

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- Two-thirds of children with an ADHD diagnosis are on medication to treat their disorder.

A possible solution?

In one study cited by Dr. Granat, a group of boys with ADHD were trained in sports and then given opportunities to display those skills within a peer group. Between that study and others cited in the article, it seems that there are numerous benefits to exercise.

An association between improvements in sports performance and an increase in positive social interactions emerged (Armstrong & Drabman, 2004).

Some of the benefits of sport participation include a decrease in risky behaviors and increased integration into social settings (Kremerik, 2000). Specific to children with ADHD, participation in a sport can help to increase peer relations, which are often negative (Bagwell et al, 2001).

The boys also reported greater self-efficacy, self-confidence and happiness. Teachers reported that boys in this program showed more persistence in the classroom and a decrease in attention-seeking behaviors (Armstrong & Drabman, 2004).

Where do we go from here?

One school, featured in [ADDitude Magazine](#), a magazine dedicated to issues surrounding ADHD, has taken exercise to the next level. Says the magazine,

“A school in Colorado starts off students’ days with 20 minutes of aerobic exercise to increase alertness. If they act up in class, they aren’t given time-outs but time-ins — 10 minutes of activity on a stationary bike or an elliptical trainer.”

According to Dr Ratey, author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, “The result is that kids realize they can regulate their mood and attention through exercise,” says Ratey. “That’s empowering.”

While this method may be atypical for a school, they may be on to something. Our children spend far more time in front of the television, computer and gaming systems than previous generations. At the same time, our diagnoses of ADHD have skyrocketed.

Are the two linked? We have yet to know for sure, but it seems that our sedentary nature could be impacting our attention spans.

Related Stories:

[Are Too Many Children Being Diagnosed with Special Needs?](#)

[Pesticides May Increase Risk of ADHD in Children](#)

[Mexico Bans Junk Food for Children](#)

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Photo thanks to [Kathy](#) via flickr

Is our sedentary nature impacting our attention spans?

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Lions and tigers and bears,,oh my,,, They're all top tier carnivores and endangered. About the only...

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Beautiful and yes we have to teach the once who are not getting it yet!

 [Michaela Peters](#) comments on [Silent Super Bowl Ad Will Highlight Unhealthy Oceans](#)

Look; I love that Budweiser is putting up big bucks by helping dogs in danger, however, it's obvious...

 [Lee Witton](#) comments on [Superbowl Win for Rescue Dog](#)

57 comments



Aurelien B.

7:39am PST on Jan 30, 2011

And what about asking to the kids themselves if they agree?

I didn't like sport very much, especially in group, and I hated competition!

IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A VERY GREAT IDEA FOR ME REALLY NOT, EXCEPT MAYBE IF I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE THE SPORT IN QUESTION AND WHERE TO PRACTICE IT (AND HOW) (Mabe Calvinball :))

BUT THE THING I HATE THE MOST IS ALWAYS HEARING ABOUT MY BRAIN AS A THING TO CURE OR CHANGE, MY NEUROLOGY DESERVES RESPECT, I DESERVE RESPECT AND THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHAT I WANT TO DO OF MY LIFE AND MY BRAIN (And yes I already deserved it when I was a kid!)

Signed: A free ADHD-Autistic.



Rachel H.

2:19am PST on Jan 29, 2011

This is quite telling. Anyone else notice that when we stopped giving kids time to exercise, the 'diagnoses' of kids with ADHD skyrocketed? I've had to babysit kids, I've worked in Sunday Schools and on VBS camps. Kids are always able to pay attention more if they've played sports and games first.

It's how kids work psychologically! They need play and movement. It's no wonder they can't pay attention! Maybe it's not a disorder; maybe it's the way we're treating them, with a simple fix instead of drugging them into sluggishness. You can't really expect a child to sit there for 8+ hours and not squirm around; and then he/she goes home and sits in front of the TV, which rewards a short attention span with flashy ads and things that happen snap-snap-snap.

Get those kids back out again, I think you'll find a lot of these problems going down.



Martha E.

9:11pm PST on Jan 28, 2011

Seems like common sense. Exercise and attention to the diet of a child will change his/her energy level for the better. In the "old days" (sorry, I'm old) we didn't have ADHD. Kids went outside and played, expended their energies. We ate REAL food, not packaged and preserved foods with sugar and additives. Now, immediately, the doc prescribes a pill -- kids are full of drugs instead of using their natural energy to play and work and live. Grab those kids away from the t.v. Turn off their computers. Don't allow kids to have cell phones. BE an adult. You know what's best for kids, not them. When they whine and say, "everybody has one," SAY NO. Remember when we used to catch fireflies in a jar?, play with sticks and mud?, go running? Do THAT with your kids. They'll end up happier and more content. (and no, I'm not living in a dream world). This could be reality if parents would be parents.

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Cynthia S. Cynthia Samuels, currently Managing Editor of Care2, Causes, has been working with blogs and... [more](#)



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Ayax R.

5:30pm PST on Jan 26, 2011

Amazing



12:06pm PST on Jan 26, 2011

How many adults like to sit in cubicles for 8 hours a day, only getting up for a 30 minute lunch and maybe go to the bathroom? It's not so bad, I've done it. Now take away all access to the outside world. No phone, no internet. Just listening to a teacher. All day..

I'm sure most of us would become "ADHD/ADD" very quickly, huh? School districts need to put P.E. back onto the DAILY routine, this twice a week (one day for exercise, one day of movies) isn't cutting it. Hey, maybe give kids recess back. Just a thought. There was enough time in the school day a few years ago for all subjects, including going to music, computer labs, the library and P.E. Now everything has been removed to cut budgets and focus on state testing. The end result? More overweight kids and others getting pills shoved down their throats. Is it really worth it?):



Sue M.

9:27am PST on Jan 26, 2011

thanks for this posting.



Rose N.

8:27am PST on Jan 26, 2011

Thank you for posting.



Bon L.

5:10am PST on Jan 26, 2011

Thanks for the info.



Donna H.

10:41pm PST on Jan 25, 2011

Attention span!?! Huh, what, oh sorry I saw something shiny...



Norma V.

10:35pm PST on Jan 25, 2011

Rely on exercise to stimulate the brain, increase clarity, focus, and watch the toxins we put into our bodies. How empowering that children can be master of their bodies and not make excuses about ADHD or some diagnosis...

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