## Brain Train Bugle

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## New study shows multidisciplinary brain training works!

Thirty-four adults around 70 years of age who were seeking treatment for issues with memory loss were treated five hours per week for 12 weeks in a comprehensive brain fitness program. The program included 24 sessions of cognitive training using the Captain's Log MindPower Builder; it also included 24 neurofeedback sessions, 12 sessions of brain coaching, personal fitness recommendations, and mindfulness meditation.

The treatment interventions used in this brain fitness program were provided by certified clinicians. Participants were given a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation that included tests of working memory, verbal learning, visual memory, executive functioning and verbal fluency. The comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach used was designed to strengthen brain functioning and possibly delay the progression of cognitive impairments.

Pre and post testing of the various cognitive functions were completed using a 10-test battery. Taken as a whole, the neurocognitive test battery demonstrated that there was a significant improvement in the treatment group. These results suggest that a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary brain fitness approach is likely to be clinically effective in improving the cognitive functioning of older adults with memory impairments. The intervention group in this study demonstrated improvements in language, memory, attention, and verbal cognitive skills. Their greatest improvements were related to tests which measured immediate recall and working memory abilities. 47% of the patients showed significant improvements on a test of working memory. Fitness measurements were also obtained; while there was an overall 12% improvement in physical fitness, this



change only indicated a trend in the improvement of overall physical conditioning for the study participants.

In conclusion, results of this study support that an intensive, comprehensive brain training approach combining neurofeedback, cognitive training, mindfulness meditation, physical exercise, and brain coaching can be effective in improving the cognitive performance of elderly individuals seeking help for memory problems. Further research using this multidisciplinary approach is needed to replicate these findings and to clarify the specific effect of the individual components used. In addition, research to evaluate the long-term effects of this type of intervention and the time necessary to achieve lasting effects would help advance the field of brain training.

One important element is that brain training interventions will generally have the greatest effect when implemented by skilled health care professionals. It is unlikely that individuals with impairments working at home would have the wherewithal to maintain the intensity and discipline to practice systematically on their own to the degree required to achieve significant improvements in their brain



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functioning. In addition, given the age and impairments of the participants, additional training of at least three months, would need to be considered as possibly leading to even greater improvements.

Fotuhi M., Lubinski B., Riloff T., Trullinger M., Gasemi M. (2014). Evaluation of a multidisciplinary "Brain Fitness Program" for treatment of cognitive impairment in elderly. JSM Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementia. 1(1):102-110.

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