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## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy**

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0603/060314-jogging.html>

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**14 March, 2006**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy**

A newly published report indicates that jogging could have adverse health effects, especially for those who do it alone. A team of researchers from Harvard University has suggested that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as previously believed and is nowhere near as beneficial as jogging as part of a group. They suggested it could actually be detrimental to one's health. Experiments conducted on rats indicated that running alone raises stress levels and stifles brain cell regeneration. Professor Elizabeth Gould, who led the research, said: "These results suggest that, in the absence of social interaction, a normally beneficial experience can exert a potentially deleterious influence on the brain."

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise wheels. One group exercised alone, the other as part of a rodent jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists conducted tests to ascertain the rate of brain cell growth in all of the test animals. The results revealed that the communal joggers had double the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "When experienced in a group setting, running stimulates neurogenesis (brain cell growth). However, when running occurs in social isolation, these positive effects are suppressed." Joggers around the world should perhaps take the research with a pinch of salt and remember that jogging 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 / exercise / wheels / growth / social isolation / salt / 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 by far and away 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 have adverse health effects. T / F
- b. Jogging with other people may be healthier than running alone. T / F
- c. Rats experienced a decrease in brain cell growth when running 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 increased their brain power twofold. T / F
- g. Joggers should throw a pinch of salt over their shoulder before a run. T / F
- h. For rats, jogging is healthier than racing. T / F

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

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. indicates       | degree of suspicion |
| b. adverse         | apply               |
| c. previously      | subdued             |
| d. stifles         | implies             |
| e. exert           | triggers            |
| f. ascertain       | suppresses          |
| g. stimulates      | determine           |
| h. suppressed      | detrimental         |
| i. a pinch of salt | nine-to-five        |
| j. rat race        | once                |

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

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| a. jogging could have adverse           | cell regeneration             |
| b. not as healthy as                    | influence on the brain        |
| c. stifles brain                        | of rats on exercise wheels    |
| d. the absence of social                | as the solo runners           |
| e. exert a potentially deleterious      | health effects                |
| f. researchers monitored two groups     | are suppressed                |
| g. conducted tests to ascertain         | of salt                       |
| h. double the amount of new brain cells | previously believed           |
| i. these positive effects               | interaction                   |
| j. take the research with a pinch       | the rate of brain cell growth |

## 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 newly published report indicates that jogging could have \_\_\_\_\_ health effects, especially for those who do it \_\_\_\_\_. A team of researchers from Harvard University has suggested that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as previously believed and is \_\_\_\_\_ near as beneficial as jogging as part of a group. They suggested it could \_\_\_\_\_ be detrimental to one's health. Experiments conducted on rats indicated that running alone raises stress levels and \_\_\_\_\_ brain cell regeneration. Professor Elizabeth Gould, who \_\_\_\_\_ the research, said: "These results suggest that, in the absence of social \_\_\_\_\_, a normally beneficial experience can exert a potentially \_\_\_\_\_ influence on the brain."

*stifles*

*alone*

*interaction*

*actually*

*adverse*

*deleterious*

*led*

*nowhere*

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise \_\_\_\_\_. One group exercised alone, the other as part of a \_\_\_\_\_ jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists conducted tests to ascertain the \_\_\_\_\_ of brain cell growth in all of the test animals. The results revealed that the communal joggers had \_\_\_\_\_ the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "When experienced in a group \_\_\_\_\_, running stimulates neurogenesis (brain cell growth). However, when running \_\_\_\_\_ in social isolation, these positive effects are suppressed." Joggers around the world should perhaps take the research with a \_\_\_\_\_ of salt and remember that jogging is healthier than the rat \_\_\_\_\_.

*setting*

*rodent*

*pinch*

*double*

*race*

*wheels*

*occurs*

*rate*

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A newly published report indicates that jogging could have \_\_\_\_\_ health effects, especially for those who do it alone. A team of researchers from Harvard University has suggested that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as \_\_\_\_\_ believed and is nowhere near as \_\_\_\_\_ as jogging as part of a group. They suggested it could actually be \_\_\_\_\_ to one's health. Experiments conducted on rats indicated that running alone raises stress levels and stifles brain cell \_\_\_\_\_. Professor Elizabeth Gould, who led the research, said: "These results suggest that, in the \_\_\_\_\_ of social interaction, a normally beneficial experience can exert a potentially \_\_\_\_\_ influence on the brain."

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise wheels. One group exercised alone, the other as part of a \_\_\_\_\_ jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists conducted tests to \_\_\_\_\_ the rate of brain cell growth in all of the test animals. The results \_\_\_\_\_ that the communal joggers had double the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "When experienced in a group setting, running \_\_\_\_\_ neurogenesis (brain cell growth). However, when running occurs in social \_\_\_\_\_, these positive effects are suppressed." Joggers around the world should perhaps take the research with a \_\_\_\_\_ of salt and remember that jogging is healthier than the \_\_\_\_\_.

## 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:

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| • adverse     | • wheels     |
| • own         | • ascertain  |
| • detrimental | • double     |
| • indicated   | • stimulates |
| • absence     | • suppressed |
| • exert       | • pinch      |

## 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 big 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 treadmills to real people exercising through 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. Would you say you were 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 take with a pinch of salt?
- 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. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. indicates	implies
b. adverse	detrimental
c. previously	once
d. stifles	suppresses
e. exert	apply
f. ascertain	determine
g. stimulates	triggers
h. suppressed	subdued
i. a pinch of salt	degree of suspicion
j. rat race	nine-to-five

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. jogging could have adverse	health effects
b. not as healthy as	previously believed
c. stifles brain	cell regeneration
d. the absence of social	interaction
e. exert a potentially deleterious	influence on the brain
f. researchers monitored two groups	of rats on exercise wheels
g. conducted tests to ascertain	the rate of brain cell growth
h. double the amount of new brain cells	as the solo runners
i. these positive effects	are suppressed
j. take the research with a pinch	of salt

### GAP FILL:

#### Researchers say jogging alone is unhealthy

A newly published report indicates that jogging could have **adverse** health effects, especially for those who do it **alone**. A team of researchers from Harvard University has suggested that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as previously believed and is **nowhere** near as beneficial as jogging as part of a group. They suggested it could **actually** be detrimental to one's health. Experiments conducted on rats indicated that running alone raises stress levels and **stifles** brain cell regeneration. Professor Elizabeth Gould, who **led** the research, said: "These results suggest that, in the absence of social **interaction**, a normally beneficial experience can exert a potentially **deleterious** influence on the brain."

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise **wheels**. One group exercised alone, the other as part of a **rodent** jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists conducted tests to ascertain the **rate** of brain cell growth in all of the test animals. The results revealed that the communal joggers had **double** the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: "When experienced in a group **setting**, running stimulates neurogenesis (brain cell growth). However, when running **occurs** in social isolation, these positive effects are suppressed." Joggers around the world should perhaps take the research with a **pinch** of salt and remember that jogging is healthier than the rat **race**.