<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jun/27/exercise-helps-children-learn-say-experts>

Exercise helps children learn, say experts

Brain development and long-term health benefit from vigorous activity at a young age, according to academics from eight countries

 Time away from lessons in the playground does not impair academic performance, say experts.

 Photograph: John Powell/Alamy

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Pupils who do sport or physical activity during [school](https://www.theguardian.com/education/schools) hours do not see their learning or exam results suffer, experts say.

Even one session of an activity that raises children’s heart rate is good for both their brain and their education, according to a panel of 24 specialists in exercise from eight countries, including Britain.

“Time taken away from academic lessons in favour of physical activity has been shown to not come at the expense of scholastic performance in children and youth,” they say.

They have combined to agree a joint statement on the multiple benefits of exercise for [children](https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/children) and young people, which was published on Monday in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

In a plea for better provision of parks, playgrounds and cycle lanes they say that the latest available evidence shows that anything involving exertion, from walking to organised sport to simply playing outdoors, can be good for a child’s physical and mental development.

“A single session of moderate physical activity has an acute benefit to brain function, cognition and scholastic performance in children and youth,” they say in their 21-point agreed statement.

“Physical activity before, during and after school promotes scholastic performance in children and youth. Mastery of fundamental movement skills is beneficial to cognition and scholastic performance in children and youth,” they add.

Children’s involvement in any form of structured or unstructured physical activity in or outside school time can also help prevent chronic diseases in adulthood such as diabetes or coronary artery disease and be a key part of the treatment of certain childhood conditions, they add.

The authors include Peter Krustrup and Craig Williams of Exeter University, Joan Duda of Birmingham University, Ken Green from Chester University and Symeon Dagkas from the University of East London.