EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN AND REDUCE ADHD SYMPTOMS

By Terri Phillips, MFT

We all know how important it is to stay healthy. Most of us currently belong to a gym, have in the past or exercise our bodies outside in the California sunshine. While we all acknowledge the importance of exercise to maintain a healthy body, many of us ignore exercising our brains. Our brains are crucial to optimal functioning. Every nerve and muscle in our bodies is ultimately attached to our brain. This point is clearly demonstrated in Dr. Vince Monastra's work Parenting Children With ADHD: 10 Lessons That Medicine Cannot Teach. It published a study in 2003 with 100 participants ages 6 – 10 years old with ADHD. This study examined the effects of Ritalin, EEG Biofeedback (*Neurofeedback*) and parenting styles in symptoms reduction. Only the participants who received *Neurofeedback* during the study were able to sustain gains after the Ritalin was removed. The others reverted back to baseline symptoms, in other words, did not learn.

Symptoms of ADHD include an inability to sustain attention on a desired task at school or at work, distraction by new stimulus that presents itself and difficulty fidgeting. School or work can become a nightmare while depression and anxiety can coexist with ADHD.

In this world of technology, *Neurofeedback* has emerged as a viable option to exercise and regulate brain function. *Neurofeedback* is a non-invasive form of treatment used for a variety of issues such as anxiety, depression, attention and focus, autism spectrum disorders, sleep issues, chronic pain and peak performance. The goal of *Neurofeedback* is to help the individual's brain learn to regulate in a calm, focused alert manner by way of computer feedback. The process is painless and sensors connect brainwaves to computers to allow the individual to learn to control their brain function.

Adults and children can benefit from the process as the computer gives feedback by beeps and the progression of a game to allow the brain to know when it reaches a regulated state. Once the brain learns how to regulate itself,

the frequency of the sessions can be decreased because the brain is able to produce the regulated state without connecting to the computer. The amazing human brain learns to do this task.

Neurofeedback is often able to begin to produce the desired results to improve focus and attention for ADHD symptoms in the first few weeks. The goal of the professional *Neurofeedback* provider is to set up target goals to track success and results and decrease the frequency of sessions as necessary. Sessions are usually 30 mins and are conducted in a comfortable office setting.

Research is never complete and there is always room for more. Several studies have yielded exciting positive results. Any readers interested in looking at the most recent research studies can find them easily at www.eeginfo.com or www.eegspectrum.com or www.isnr.org . As research efforts continue, there are several books available as well explaining the positive effects of *Neurofeedback*. To name a few, A Symphony in the Brain by Jim Robbins, ADD: the 20-Hour Solution by Mark Steinberg, PhD and Siegfried Othmer, PhD, and Healing Young Brains – The Neurofeedback Solution by Robert W. Hill PhD and Eduardo Castro MD.

"Neurofeedback is a new type of computerized biofeedback that has begun to wend its way into the health care system with dramatic effects". Robbins, 1998 – *Wired for Miracles*, Psychology Today. As with any form of treatment it is important to find an experienced provider to explain more about how *Neurofeedback* can help you or your children.

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