

Are Leaders Born or Made?

Surprising verdict about increasing intelligence: Timoney Institute poll June 10th 2020

In a surprising reversal of the commonly accepted view that “IQ” cannot be raised significantly, a large majority of respondents indicated that intelligence can indeed be increased.

Fully 87% of respondents answered affirmatively to the question “*Can brainpower (intellectual capacity) be increased, in your opinion* “

While debate still rages about the nature of intelligence and recently the types of intelligence (such as emotional intelligence), such strong affirmation from these business and society leaders will be encouraging to people interested in their developing themselves or helping others to develop.

The measures suggested in this Webinar are similar to those involved in becoming a more rounded person or indeed a potential leader: some activities, such as learning to be proficient with a musical instrument, such as a guitar, can raise IQ by as much as 6 points e.g. from the standard median score of 100, to a new score of 106.

It is worth noting that the first IQ tests were developed by a French psychologist Alfred Binet precisely to counter the prevailing wisdom that IQ was class-related, belonging mainly to the gentry. Later, the prevailing view became that intelligence was essentially fixed.

The modern view, expressed by authorities such as Chris Argyris or Harvard’s Carol Dweck is that we can “learn to learn”, thereby either increasing our base intelligence, or at least learning to use our brainpower more effectively.

It is important to distinguish between at least three different meanings of the word intelligence. There is biological intelligence, or what is typically defined as neural efficiency. Then there’s psychometric intelligence – your measured IQ score – which is an indirect and imperfect method of estimating biological intelligence. To increase biological intelligence, research during the past decade using various neuro-technologies (brain fitness programs) has suggested that it is possible to fine-tune your neural efficiency, or mental horsepower. Your cognitive functions can be made to work more efficiently, and in a more synchronized manner.

Activities that can boost your IQ

There are two categories of human intelligence: fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence. Fluid intelligence is associated with abstract reasoning, while crystallized intelligence is associated with intellectual skill development. These types of intelligence can be influenced by a variety of genetic and environmental factors, including parental IQ, genes, nutrition and education.

Here are some activities you can do to improve various areas of your intelligence, from reasoning and planning to problem-solving and more.

1. Memory activities

Memory activities can help to improve not only memory, but also reasoning and language skills.

Reasoning and language are both used as intelligence measures, meaning that memory activities can continue to develop intelligence.

Activities that involve memory training include jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, concentration card game, or sudoku

2. Executive control activities

Executive control is the ability to control complex cognitive activities. Research suggests that executive function is strongly tied to fluid reasoning, one aspect of human intelligence.

Activities that involve executive control training include brainteasers and board games.

3. Visuospatial reasoning activities

Visuospatial reasoning involves the mental processes related to physical representations.

Activities that involve visual and spatial training include mazes, point-of-view activities, 3-D models

5. Musical instruments

You don't have to become the next famous musician to benefit from learning a musical instrument.

A study found that musicians have better working memory than non-musicians.

5. Networking with others, widening your field of view.

6. New languages

7. Frequent reading

8. Questioning assumptions, staying curious, debating ideas, change perspectives

9. Continued education

Education, in any form, is crucial to the development of human intelligence.

Also, some abilities (e.g. fluid reasoning and crystallized intelligence, or verbal abilities) are more stable over time, while others are less stable (e.g. short-term memory and cognitive processing speed).

You may have a certain level of general intelligence but it is important how you use it. When you approach a task, how well do you plan? How well do you adjust your response if it's not going well? These non-cognitive traits can be improved more easily than cognitive abilities.