

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Duplicate the DFTV student pages (pp. 3–6), and distribute them to your students. Read the questions posed by the young scientists. Encourage your students to describe how they would investigate the questions. Guide them through the steps of developing an inquiry (see below).

If you have a videotape of the episodes, play it to see how the DFTV scientists investigated the questions, and what their results were. The investigations are also described on page 7 of this guide and on the DragonflyTV Web site. Apply the ideas learned in the DFTV example to the classroom activity "Do It, Get to It", or encourage students to do the investigation described in "Take it Outside!"

If your students develop investigations of their own, encourage them to visit the DragonflyTV Web site, www.dragonflytv.org. On the link titled "Be on DFTV" they can describe their investigation and they'll be considered for the next season of DragonflyTV!

OBSERVATIONAL

1. Write the question: How does A compare to B? Make a hypothesis.
2. Decide what to measure or observe for both A and B, and how to do it.
3. Make multiple observations when possible. Record all results.
4. Organize the data in a table or chart, looking for differences or similarities.
5. Write an answer to the original question. Also write down any new questions that come up during this investigation.

EXPERIMENTAL

1. Write the question: If I change A, what happens to B. Make a hypothesis.
2. Choose the independent variable (the thing you change) and dependent variable (the thing that is affected), and how to measure them.
3. Do multiple trials when possible.
4. Organize the data into a table, and prepare a graph. Look for patterns or trends.
5. Write an answer to the original question. Also write down any new questions that come up during this investigation.



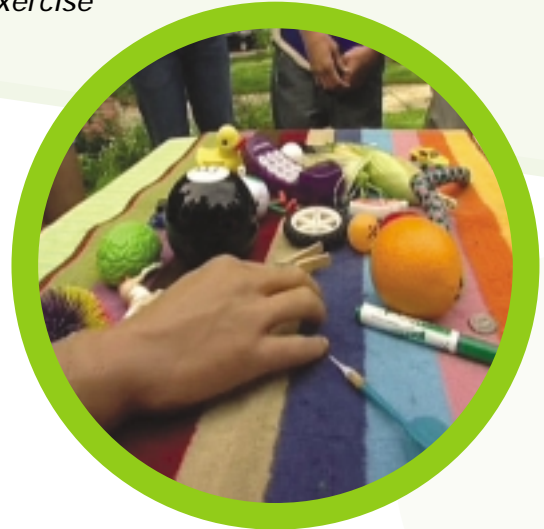
206 / HUMAN BODY: Does exercise improve my memory?

What's Up?

We're Jada and Maurna. We heard that exercise can make your brain work better, but we wanted to know if working out really makes your brain work better. For our DragonflyTV investigation, we asked: *Can exercise sharpen our memories?*

HOW WOULD YOU INVESTIGATE THIS QUESTION?

Plan a memory test. What does it look like, what equipment will you need, and how long will it take? Now think about the exercise component. What kind of physical activity qualifies as "exercise" for your investigation? Do you need to grab some friends to use as subjects, or are you just testing yourself? Why? Track your investigation in your notebook, and include your findings. Discuss them with your teacher, or go to www.dragonflytv.org to learn about Jada and Maurna's discoveries.



Do It, Get To It

Investigate whether exercise affects how you and your classmates do on math speed tests. Ask your teacher for a math facts speed test. Have everybody answer as many questions as they can in one minute. Only count the correct answers. Now have half the class exercise for 5 minutes, while the others read a book. Then take a new speed test. Did your classmates improve their score, or not? Was there a difference between the exercise group and the reading group?

Take It Outside!

Take the DragonflyTV memory challenge. Log on to www.dragonflytv.org and click on Investigate This! Go to the link for What Time of Day is Your Memory the Best? Do an investigation where you keep track of your score at different times of the day. You can also check how kids in your state have done. Do a comparison of eight-year-olds to 14-year-olds. Do kids of different ages seem to have the best results at different times of the day?



Student
Page

4

A PRODUCTION OF
TWIN CITIES PUBLIC TELEVISION



DragonflyTV is a production of Twin Cities Public Television (TPT), St. Paul/Minneapolis, and is made possible by major grants from Best Buy Children's Foundation and the National Science Foundation.
©2003 Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)

About the DFTV Investigations (for the educator)



MODEL ROCKET

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARD

Earth Science Grades K-4:

Understanding About Science and Technology

Physical Science Grades 5-8:

Abilities of Technological Design

Aren tested two body sizes, wide and skinny. Mary Lynn tested two different nose cones, rounded and pointy. Jessica tested two fin sizes, large and small. Each young scientist flew both versions of his or her rocket, checking the onboard altimeter after each flight. They combined the best characteristics from each test into one final rocket design. They used the skinny body, pointy nose cone, and full sized fins to create... The Chosen One. After a misfire on their first launch, the next attempt proved successful, as their rocket flew to 1586 feet (483 meters)!

There are other factors for your students to consider, such as rocket mass, surface coating, etc. For more details about this investigation, visit www.dragonflytv.org.

EXERCISE AND MEMORY

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARD

Earth Science Grades K-4:

Personal Health

Physical Science Grades 5-8:

Personal Health

The girls found 20 household items and set them on a tray. They gave their friends one minute to study the tray. Then each friend had to write down as many items as they could remember. Half the group went off to do exercises for 10 minutes, while the other half played board games. Then everybody came back for a new memory test, with 20 new items. The girls found that on average the exercise group improved its memory score by four points, while the resting group's average score decreased by one. The girls concluded that you can't exercise just once and really improve your memory, but exercising can make you feel alert and improve your focus.

Caution your students about the difficulties in conducting experiments to measure human performance. Discuss ways to guard against false data. For more details visit www.dragonflytv.org.

EXTREME SOUNDS

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARD

Earth Science Grades K-4:

Changes in Environments

Physical Science Grades 5-8:

Risks and Benefits

The girls borrowed a decibel meter from Tarissa's dad and took it to different places in the city. They visited everything from a "quiet room" in a sound laboratory to a video arcade, even the top of the Empire State Building! They were surprised to learn that even a quiet library is 40 times louder than the quiet room. They also discovered that the arcade was louder than the subway, dangerously loud at over 85 decibels. They also found that the sound intensity depends on how close you are to the source.

One of the most challenging features of sound intensity is the logarithmic nature of the decibel scale. Work with students to help them understand that 60 dB isn't twice as loud as 30 dB, but more than 30 times louder! For more details, visit www.dragonflytv.org.

SAND DUNES

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARD

Earth Science Grades K-4:

Changes in the Earth and Sky

Physical Science Grades 5-8:

Populations and Ecosystems

The kids chose dunes in three locations to study: foredunes (at the ocean front); scrub dunes (slightly inland), and active dunes (further inland). At each location they used a soil moisture meter to determine the moisture content in the first 12 inches (30 cm) of sand. They also laid down a 10 foot (3 m) rope and recorded the number and type of plants it touched, and estimated the dune's size. They found that the active dunes had too little moisture to support plants, and the dry sand allowed them to be eroded easily by winds. Fore dunes had high moisture, but were battered by ocean winds and water, making it hard for plants to grow there. Scrub dunes supported the greatest number of plants, and are less easily eroded by the winds.

Have your students think about what makes the scrub dunes more permanent than the other dunes. Discuss the relationship of soil moisture and plant growth. For more details visit www.dragonflytv.org.

Teacher
Page

7