

Ten Amazing Brain Facts

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Here are ten more brain facts:

1. Your brain needs a continuous supply of oxygen. A 10 minute loss of oxygen will usually cause significant neural damage. Cold can lengthen this time, which is why cold-water drowning victims have been revived after as much as 40 minutes - without brain damage.
2. Your brain uses a fifth of all your blood. It needs it to keep up with the heavy metabolic demands of its neurons. It needs not only the glucose that is delivered, but of course, the oxygen.
3. Your brain feels no pain. There are no nerves that register pain within the brain itself. Because of this, neurosurgeons can probe the brain while a patient is conscious (what fun!). By doing this, they can use feedback from the patient to identify important regions, such as those used for speech, or visualization.
4. The cerebellum is sometimes called the "little brain," and weighs about 150 grams (a little over five ounces). Found at the lower back side of your brain, you need your cerebellum to maintain posture, to walk, and to perform any coordinated movements. It may also play a role in your sense of smell.
5. The human brain weighs an average of a little over three pounds, or 1.4 kilograms. Albert Einstein's brain may have been smaller than yours, because he was smaller than average. There is a general correlation between body size and the size of our brains.
6. An elephant's brain is huge - about six times as large as a human brain. However, in relation to body size, humans have the largest brain of all the animals, averaging about 2% of body weight. A cat's brain? It weighs about one ounce, a little over 1% of body weight.
7. There are about 100,000 miles of blood vessels in the brain. If they were stretched out (there's a nice thought!) they would circle the earth more than four times.
8. If you have an average sized brain, you have about 100 billion neurons up there. You'll be happy about that after reading the next item.
9. Approximately 85,000 neocortical neurons are lost each day in your brain. Fortunately, this goes unnoticed due to the built-in redundancies and the fact that even after three years this loss adds up to less than 1% of the total. Oh, and look at the next item.
10. Recent research proves that your brain continues to produce new neurons throughout your life. It also proves that it does so in response to stimulation (do those brainpower exercises). Scientists refer to this as brain plasticity or neuro-plasticity. You may find this one the most encouraging of these brain facts.

Short note about the author

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