

Learning New Skills

Recently I've been inspired to try to learn how to jump rope. I already know the basic jump, but I've never learned the more highly-coordinated skills like cross-overs. The act of learning these skills is very frustrating (I'm not very good at it), but at the same time incredibly fulfilling. As I struggle to understand the steps and why the rope keeps getting tangled up in my feet, I can feel the connections slowly forming in my brain. Unlocking each new skill brings with it a sense of accomplishment that has been largely missing during the last year of lockdowns and endless waiting for a return to some sort of normalcy.

It turns out there are physiological benefits to learning new skills other than just feeling good about yourself. Learning challenging new skills increases the myelination in our brains, which allows you to learn better and faster. The key word here is "challenging." In order for this myelination effect to take place, the task must be hard. Tasks do not need to be physical, you could learn a new skill such as learning a new language or wood working. Learning new skills also appears to have a protective effect against developing disorders such as Alzheimer's or dementia.

This [article](#) highlights some of the benefits for learning a new skill on brain health.

And if jump rope sounds like a skill you'd be into, I've started a club with some friends! Send me a message and you can join us for our next practice 😊

