

Mind-body exercises could help improve cognitive function as adults age

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Mind-body exercises such as tai chi and dance could help to improve global cognition, cognitive flexibility, working memory, verbal fluency and learning in cognitively intact or impaired older adults, according to a new meta-analysis published in the [Journal of the American Geriatrics Society](#).

Researchers examined data from 32 randomised controlled trials with 3,624 older adults to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of mind-body exercises for cognitive performance in aging individuals with or without cognitive impairment. Participants taking part in mind-body exercise were compared with a control group of participants with usual care or other therapy.

They found mind-body exercises had benefits in improving global cognition compared with that of the control group (mean difference [MD] 0.92; 95% CI 0.33-1.51; P=.002). They were also more effective than control interventions in promoting cognitive flexibility, working memory, verbal fluency and learning in cognitively intact or impaired older adults.

In dose-subgroup analysis, only moderate exercise intensity significantly increased global cognition scores compared with those of the control group.

“Healthcare workers can suggest that aging adults or patients with mild cognitive impairment choose mind-body exercise as their evidence-based alternative intervention for preventing cognitive decline or improving cognitive performance including global cognition, cognitive flexibility, working memory, verbal fluency, and learning ability,” the authors said.