Ride On!

How cycling can help schoolkids struggling with ADHD

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Several years ago, scientists chose to study the effects of cycling on 47 kids ages 11 to 14 with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a brain disorder that makes it hard for individuals to pay attention and control impulsive behaviors. Their findings showed positive effects on the children's brain activity, attention span and mood as well as improvements to fitness and body mass index—a ratio of height to weight—after the youngsters began biking.

The results triggered the launch of a nonprofit group called Specialized Foundation, which created Riding for Focus. Now, the organization helps institutions implement the cycling program as a tool for middle schoolers—with and without ADHD—to use to improve academic skills and social, emotional and physical well-being.

According to Kim Price, PhD, a neuroscientist and director of research and school programs at the foundation, "You can see benefits on things like cognition, mood and attention after just a single 20-minute bout of activity."

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