***3 Reasons to Play More Video Games***

**Video games increase your problem solving skills.** Evidence suggests that RPGs are great for brain training. Games such as the incredibly popular Call of Duty can improve your cognitive abilities even more than games specifically designed to do so by designers like Luminosity. Consider some advice from Jane McGonigal (world renowned designer of alternate reality games, PhD in performance studies): she suggests that if you want to have fun and stimulate your mind, playing about 3 times a week for just 20 minutes each time should do it. Just about all of the most popular video games have some requirement for problem solving and/or critical thinking. This promotes adaptability and cognitive flexibility. These are really important skills to have in any kind of problem solving task.

**Gamers are better at visual tasks.** Video games sharpen the visual processing skills of frequent users. Researchers pretty much agree on the idea that gamers perform better than (or at least comparable to) non-gamers on many visual tasks. Studies have previously shown that compared to non-gamers, experienced gamers are better at: tracking objects; keeping track of several objects simultaneously; filtering out irrelevant information; switching from task to task; detecting changes in visual layouts; and 3D mental rotation. A recent study conduct by researchers at Brown University found that gaming does improve visual skill, but it might also contribute to learning ability. Video game practice was associated with improved visual learning, but it may also allow gamers to improve on those attributes faster than the average person. At least one experiment has found that playing video games can improve the mental rotation abilities of non-gamers. Game-related improvements (in general) are permanent. They are typically associated with lasting changes in cognitive processing.

**Gamers have better**[**memories**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/memory)**.** Anyone who fears the onset of (or is currently suffering from) dementia, or just wants to remember stuff better should play video games. A team of neurobiologists from the University of California have found that playing 3D computer games can boost memory power. They got a group of people to play 2D games half an hour a day for 2 weeks, and another group to play 3D games half an hour a day for 2 weeks. Everyone was given a memory test before and after the 2 weeks. The 2D group didn’t really improve at all, but the 3D group improved by 12%. This might not seem like a whole lot but 12% is about the amount that memory performance decreases between the ages of 45 and 70. Previous studies have shown that exploration of a 3D [environment](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/environment) promotes the growth of neurons, and can lead to increases in the size of the memory capacity. This is great news for gamers.

Reference:

7 reasons to play more computer games. (2016, July 01). Retrieved May 08, 2017, from <http://www.menshealth.co.uk/healthy/brain-training/7-reasons-to-play-computer-games>

***3 Reasons Video Games Make You Worse at Life***

**They are addictive.** Do anything long enough, and it can become a very strong habit that is hard to break. The same applies to video games. CNN recently reported on a study by Douglas Gentile, a psychologist at Iowa State University, who has been tracking video game players for decades. According to his findings, approximately 8.5 percent of children who play video games in the United States are addicted. Those statistics held up in several other countries, too. Gentile said the estimates can vary, but most studies found that 4-10 percent of children were classified as "addicted" to video games.

So what's the cause of video game addiction? Gentile broke it down to what he calls the ABCs: "The A Is Autonomy, we like to feel we're in control. B is Belonging, we like to feel connected to other people. And the C is Competence, we like to feel that we're good at what we do." As anyone who has ever fist-pumped after finally beating the last castle on Mario or thrown a controller at the TV over an interception in Madden can attest, video games can drive real emotions. Psychologist Mark Griffiths, director of the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University, added that the addiction can also be related to the constant rewards built into video games, from hitting high scores to merely the sense of accomplishment.

**They replace reality.**  For some people who become so good at video games; they simply substitute it for life. Video games are a source of fun entertainment to pass the time, but there is a line that needs to be drawn between the game portion and reality. Immersing yourself into the virtual world and focusing all your time and attention on that is not healthy and can cause serious health problems. Games are a temporary fix, not a life sentence. The video game industry does tempt us and keep us hooked. It is up to us to decide that enough is enough and put the controller down. Reality is a lot more fun and rewarding than any game once you accomplish the goals you set out to do.

**Skills do not transfer.** Video games do require skill; let’s just get that right out there. If you have played a game long enough, you know the tricks and learned what to do and what not to do. You have to have fast reflexes and a sense of your in-game environment. For multiplayer games your mind goes a step further through repetitiveness and memorizes ever map to the point you could draw them in your sleep. These are all great skills, but they do not quite transfer to reality. Bottom line, you are pushing the right buttons to make your character go, but life is a lot more complicated. Studies have shown video games do improve some motor skills and problem solving, but that is about it. You are not going to get social skills, logical skills, or any general understanding of anything. Things you encounter in life cannot be solved by skills from a video game. Sure you can use your problem solving to figure out a solution, but then you realize you have no idea how to utilize that solution because you spent too much time playing video games.

References:

Morgans, J. (2012, September 14). 10 Reasons Video Games Make You Worse at Life. Retrieved May 08, 2017, from <http://whatculture.com/gaming/10-reasons-video-games-make-you-worse-at-life?page=10>