

## READING CAN BOOST THINKING SKILLS

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The Gold Coast Bulletin · 22 Jul 2022 · 25

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**NEW YORK:** Reading a newspaper can give you the thinking skills of someone 13 years younger, a study suggests.

Research published in the journal *Neurology* set out to establish if physical and mental activities could help people's "cognitive reserves".

People with greater cognitive reserves demonstrate better thinking abilities than might be expected based on changes in their brain as it ages, including those brought about by dementia. The team, from the University of California, found taking part in mental activities boosted the thinking speed reserves.

Participants were asked whether in the past 13 months they had done three things: read magazines, newspapers or books; gone to classes; and played cards, games or bingo. Overall, for each additional category of mental activity, the researchers calculated people's thinking speed improved by the equivalent of 13 fewer years of ageing. When divided by sex, the improvement was 17 years for men and 10 years for women.

Dr Judy Pa, author of the study, said that with no treatments for Alzheimer's, it was exciting that every-day activities appeared to boost cognitive reserves.

Physical activity was linked to greater reserves of thinking speed in women, but not men.