

Improving self-control by repeated impulse inhibition

The present study investigated whether self-control can be improved by repeated practice of impulse inhibition for a certain period of time (i.e., 13 days). Sixty-four students were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions; a) stroop tasks (incongruent trials only), b) stroop tasks (congruent trials only), c) mirror drawing tasks, d) graphic drawing tasks administered with the non-dominant hand, and e) no-training. Participants in the conditions from a) to d) were required to practice the assigned tasks twice a day, which resulted in a significant improvement of self-control. Meanwhile, the one in the no-training condition showed no such change. There are two possible explanations for this pattern: First, the tasks for the active control groups (condition b) and d)) may have required some degree of impulse inhibition; Second, mere engagement to a task which involves executive functions (even without exercising impulse inhibition) may produce promotion of self-control.