

Exercise in a pill: have scientists really found a drug that's as good for you as a 10km run?

Level 2: Intermediate

Article summary: This article presents a new drug that mimics the effects of exercise and explores its advantages and limitations.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Time phrases and sequence phrases

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to let students discuss the benefits of doing exercise and having a healthy diet but also the challenges of having a regular exercise habit and maintaining a healthy diet. Ask them to share experiences of their own and/or those of people they know. End by having students brainstorm the easiest way they can imagine staying healthy. Encourage them to be very imaginative in their proposed ideas.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do this task individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. k | 7. i |
| 2. a | 8. c |
| 3. e | 9. f |
| 4. j | 10. g |
| 5. l | 11. b |
| 6. d | 12. h |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. resistance training | 7. genes |
| 2. substance | 8. high-intensity |
| 3. transfer | 9. appetite |
| 4. endurance | 10. beneficial |
| 5. free fatty acids | 11. mimic |
| 6. full-body | 12. obese |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. Encourage the students to answer in complete sentences, e.g. in item 1, they may say, 'The first mimetic was developed in 2008. It was called GW501516 or 516 for short' or something similar.

Key:

Suggested answers:

1. The first mimetic was developed in 2008.
2. Three mimetics are mentioned.
3. Lance Armstrong Mouse had more endurance and was slimmer.
4. Rats and mice
5. Changes in levels of lactate and beta-hydroxybutyrate reduce levels of free fatty acids in the blood and appetite.
6. 516 generated cancer cells and LaKe shows no signs of toxicity.
7. Exercise improves mood while reducing stress.
8. Mimetics are most useful for people who are elderly, ill or not able to do the real thing.
9. The benefits of a gentle walk are difficult to mimic with pills.
10. Against; but thinks they are useful for people who can't easily exercise.

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4. Key language

- a. This activity helps students see the difference between phrases that describe time and phrases that describe order or sequence. As an extension activity, ask students to look for these examples in the article.

Key:

Phrases describing when or how long:

a few weeks ago, for a while, right now, since then

Phrases describing order of events:

after, before, first things first, then

- b. Students complete the sentence using the phrases they have just studied in task a.

Key:

1. *A few weeks ago*
2. *After*
3. *before*
4. *first things first*
5. *for a while*
6. *since then*
7. *right now*
8. *Then*

- c. Students write two sentences using one phrase for describing time and one phrase for describing order or sequence. To encourage students to use a full range of the phrases from Exercise 4b, consider putting students in groups and dividing the phrases among them. Invite students to challenge themselves and get creative as they write their sentences. Save some time for students to share examples of their work.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to think about the advantages and disadvantages of pills like LaKe. If possible, have students research more information about these kinds of pills. Ask them to consider the long-term effects of using pills like LaKe and encourage them to use the questions provided so that they think about the possible psychological and physical effects of these pills.
- b. Students then present their ideas to the class. Encourage students to talk both about the current state of the research as well as the potential future. This will enable them to use a wider variety of phrases for describing time and phrases for describing order or sequence. Encourage students to use some of the given phrases in their presentations to help them organise and contrast their ideas.