

Distraction Reduces Pain, Study Finds

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Yahoo!:

When you distract yourself from pain, you actually hurt less, a new study suggests.

Study participants who were subjected to slight pain on their forearms reported less discomfort when they were asked to perform a distracting mental test as the pain was delivered.

Moreover, when participants were given a placebo “pain relief” cream, and distracted at the same time, their pain was even more reduced.

“Both placebo and distraction are effective mechanisms for reducing pain. You can combine them and you don’t lose anything,” said study researcher Jason Buhle, who conducted the research as part of his doctoral dissertation from Columbia University.

The work sheds light on how the placebo effect may work, Buhle said. Previously, it had been thought that the placebo effect was the result of some — perhaps unconscious — mental effort, but the new results suggest that it relies on a separate mechanism from distraction.

The study was published Jan. 18 in the journal *Psychological Science*.

Read the whole story: [Yahoo!](#)