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Bingo - Good for the Mind?

By John C. Thorensen

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When we think of bingo, genius and brainpower don't always spring to mind; these attributes have tended to be reserved for poker and other games of skill and luck. The image of a grandparent sitting in a community hall with a cup of tea and a card of bingo does not lend itself to the intrigue of psychology and mental agility. However, according to a study by the University of Southampton's Psychology Department, bingo may not be the trivial pastime many would take it for. Researchers there insist that bingo keeps the mind sharp and equate this as especially important to people as they get older.

The tests conducted revealed that bingo players were more accurate and faster in tests that measured memory, mental speed and their ability to absorb information from the environment around them, than those who did not play the game.

What seems to be the key advantage to the sustained playing of bingo is the concept of time. There is no doubt that games such as chess, poker and backgammon all stretch the mind and keep the brain functioning. Whereas the hand-eye coordination needed for bingo may not be as exhaustive as for other games, the time constraint in which players must check their numbers is key to the sustenance of mental agility.

The tests comprised of 112 people within the age brackets of 18 to 40 and 60 to 82. Half of each set played bingo. The results concluded that all bingo players were more accurate and quicker than non-players. Interestingly, in certain tests, the older players did better than the younger players. More and more research is supporting the theory that a regular partaking of activities that exercise the mind is very beneficial to the maintenance of optimum mental functioning as we get older.

Younger bingo players tended to be faster, but the older ones were more accurate. Many people have suggested that the reason people dismiss bingo as a "junior" gaming pastime is because we so often associate it with pensioners. The social stigma of bingo has kept it out of the major casinos and

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therefore reduced its respect amongst the "hipper" echelons of today's society.

Many would be led to conclude that the above study is simply out of proportion in the sense that a game of bingo is hardly a satisfactory workout for the mind in terms of endurance and mental skill. To an extent they would be right. But what the tests seem to be suggesting crucially, is that it is the prolonged or regular partaking in the game over a sustained period of time that will lead to cognitive benefits.

Then of course there are those who believe that any form of gambling being proclaimed to be beneficial to the mind is nothing short of an aberration. Whilst certainly milder in terms of the funds that change hands than other gambling games, bingo is still a game where one pays money to gain money and as such has been criticised from certain groups in society. However, the social aspect of the game cannot be overlooked and it is this type of play that would be encouraged to facilitate the mental benefits as concluded by the study described above.

In the UK, there are around three million bingo players. It is hoped that this study and the growing body of research around it will help to promote the game to those who otherwise would have written it off as something to be enjoyed with gardening, tea and everything else we assume people over the age of 65 suddenly develop a passion for.

John C. Thorensen is professional gambler and work as consultant in Royal Club Casino New York. He wrote articles about gambling and gambling strategies. Most of the articles will be included in his new book.

Online Bingo –

– Your bingo resource

How To Play Bingo

By Adel Awwad

Bingo is like a lottery – it is a game of luck. Further, learning how to play Bingo is both easy and fun. There are lots of variations in the way that Bingo is played and learning how to play Bingo and all of its variants can prove to be an exciting pastime; one with many different prizes at stake. However, the basic principles remain the same and you will discover that while learning how to play Bingo, all of the principles apply to the all important Bingo card.

The Bingo card is printed with its own unique grid of numbers, usually ranging from 1 up to 90, and is arranged in columns and rows. There is a caller who calls the randomly selected numbers for the players to mark off their card. It will be decided before the game begins what pattern of numbers are needed to win. For example, the player may need to get every number on their card, known as a full house; or a row or column, or perhaps two rows, etc.

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Bingo originated from a game called Beano; so called because players covered up the numbers on their cards with beans. Nowadays players commonly use what is known as a dauber or dabber to mark their numbers. These are often fluorescent in color so that when playing in a darkened hall they can still be seen.

Bingo can be found in different types of venues ranging from casinos to arcades and village halls. In America, Bingo is often played in halls run by church or charity organizations. If you would love to stay at home and play Bingo it can even be played on the Internet!

There are many people who like to add to the excitement and play more than one Bingo card at a time. Be warned, this is not as easy as it sounds! Playing Bingo does involve some skill as well as a lot of luck. The callers shout each number in quick succession, often within seconds of each other. You have to be very fast with your eyes and your fingers to keep up, and there is little time to ponder. It is not for the faint-hearted!

If you prefer to play a safer version, online Bingo may well be worth considering. The player is given some random cards generated by the computer, and there is often a facility for using an 'auto-dauber'. This is where the computer marks your cards for you, so it doesn't matter if you miss a number or two. The computer will even call 'Bingo!' for you if you are lucky enough to win!

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