

BrainHQ: The Brain Training Platform Behind Two Landmark Studies

Not all brain-training apps are created equal – and if you're looking for one backed by real, published, decades-long research rather than marketing claims, the evidence points clearly to one name: BrainHQ.

Built on Real Science, Not Just Game Design

BrainHQ is a cognitive training platform developed by neuroscientists, with exercises specifically designed to strengthen core cognitive domains — processing speed, memory, attention, and problem-solving. What sets it apart from most other brain-training apps on the market is the sheer weight of evidence behind it: more than 200 peer-reviewed papers, dramatically more independent research than competing platforms in this space. And unlike apps that primarily measure whether you get better at the game itself, BrainHQ's research focuses on "transfer" — whether the improvements actually carry over into real-world function, like driving, managing finances, and everyday decision-making.

The ACTIVE Study: Where BrainHQ's Reputation Was Built

BrainHQ's strongest evidence comes from its connection to the ACTIVE study, the largest cognitive training trial ever conducted – nearly 3,000 older adults followed for 20 years. Participants were divided into groups training in memory strategies, reasoning, or speed-of-processing – the exercise that would become BrainHQ's "Double Decision." When researchers checked back in two decades later using Medicare records, only the speed-of-processing group showed a lasting benefit: a 25% reduction in dementia diagnoses compared to the group that received no training at all.

That's a remarkable result for a modest time investment – participants completed roughly 10 sessions of 60–75 minutes over five to six weeks, with occasional booster sessions in later years. It's also a big part of why BrainHQ, specifically, carries a level of scientific credibility that few other brain-training products can claim.

The U.S. POINTER Study: BrainHQ as Part of a Bigger Picture

BrainHQ's role doesn't stop there. It was also one of the components of the structured lifestyle intervention tested in the U.S. POINTER study – the landmark trial that found a multi-pillar program of aerobic exercise, the MIND diet, blood pressure monitoring, and computerized cognitive training produced significantly greater improvement in global cognitive function than a self-guided approach. In POINTER, BrainHQ training was paired with social and cognitive challenge as part of the program's "brain training" pillar – reinforcing the idea that cognitive training works best as part of a broader, well-rounded lifestyle approach, not as a stand-alone fix.

The Takeaway

If the goal is genuine, evidence-backed brain training – the kind connected to real, published reductions in dementia risk – BrainHQ stands apart from the crowded brain-training app market. It's the platform behind the ACTIVE study's headline-making 20-year results, and it played a direct role in the structured intervention that produced measurable cognitive benefits in the U.S. POINTER study. For anyone serious about pairing cognitive training with the rest of a brain-healthy lifestyle, it's the option with the science to back it up.

It's never too late to start training your brain the right way.

References

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