



How Mobile Phones Have Changed Our Brains

手机如何改变我们的大脑

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One recent report found that adults in the US check their phones, on average, 344 times a day – once every four minutes – and spend almost three hours a day on their devices **in total**. The problem for many of us is that one quick phone-related task leads to a quick check of our email or social media feeds, and suddenly we've been **sucked into** endless **scrolling**.

最近的一份报告发现，美国成年人平均每天查看手机 344 次，即每 4 分钟一次，每天花在手机上的时间总计近 3 个小时。对我们很多人来说，问题在于，一件需要用到手机的小事会导致我们顺便扫一眼电子邮件或社交媒体，突然我们就陷入了无休止的刷手机中。

It's a **vicious circle**. The more useful our phones become, the more we use them. The more we use them, the more we lay **neural pathways** in our brains that lead to pick up our phones for whatever task is at hand – and the more we feel an urge to check our phone even when we don't have to.

这形成了一个恶性循环。手机越有用，我们就用得越多。我们用得越多，大脑中的神经通路就会越多，这些神经通路会导致我们不管手头上有什么事要处理，都会拿起手机。并且我们也会更想看手机，即使没有必要。

What we do know is that the simple **distraction** of checking a phone or seeing a **notification** can have negative consequences. This isn't very surprising; we know that, in general, **multitasking impairs** memory and performance. One of the most dangerous examples is phone use while driving. One study found that **merely** speaking on the phone, not texting, was enough to make drivers slower to react on the road. It's true for everyday tasks that are less **high-stakes**, too.

436 Words

in total 总共，总计 | There were probably about 40 people there in total. 总共可能有 40 人左右。

suck sb. into sth. 把某人卷入（某事） | be sucked into an intrigue /war/deception 被卷入一个阴谋/一场战争/一个骗局

scroll [skroʊl] v. 上下滚动，滚屏
n. 卷轴 | He scrolled through the document. 他把这份文件从头到尾滚动读了一遍。

vicious circle 恶性循环

neural ['nɒrəl] adj. 神经的，神经系统的

pathway ['pæθweɪ] n. 路径；神经通路

distraction [dɪ'strækʃn] n. 分散注意力的事，使人分心的事；娱乐，消遣 | I find it hard to work at home because there are too many distractions. 我发觉在家里工作很难，因为使人分心的事太多。

notification [ˌnəʊtɪfɪ'keɪʃn] n. 通知，通告 | written notification 书面通知

multitasking [ˌmʌlti'tæskɪŋ] n. 同时执行多项任务，同时做几件事情

impair [ɪm'peɪr] v. 损害，削弱 |

Simply hearing a notification “ding” made participants of another study perform far worse on a task – almost as badly as participants who were speaking or texting on the phone during the task.

我们所知道的是，查看手机或查看通知等简单的分心行为可能会产生负面影响。这并不奇怪；我们知道，一般来说，一心多用会损害记忆力，让表现变差。最危险的例子之一是开车时使用手机。一项研究发现，仅仅是打电话，而不是发短信，就足以让司机在路上反应更慢。对于那些风险没这么高的日常任务来说也是如此。在另一项研究中，仅仅是听到通知的提示音“叮”，就会让参与者在任务中表现得更差——几乎和在任务中打电话或发短信的参与者表现得一样糟糕。

It isn't just the use of a phone that has consequences – its mere **presence** can affect the way we think.

不仅仅是使用手机会对我们产生影响，仅仅是手机的存在就会影响我们的思维方式。

In one recent study, for example, researchers asked participants to either put their phones next to them so they were **visible** (like on a desk), nearby and **out of sight** (like in a bag or pocket), or in another room. Participants then completed a series of tasks to test their abilities to process and remember information, their problem-solving, and their focus.

例如，在最近的一项研究中，研究人员要求参与者要么把手机放在身边，比如放在桌子上这种看得见手机的地方，或者放在包里或口袋里这种看不到手机的地方，要么把手机放在另一个房间里。然后参与者完成一系列任务来测试他们处理和记忆信息的能力、解决问题的能力 and 注意力。

They were found to perform far better when their phones were in another room instead of nearby – whether visible, powered on or not. That **held true** even though most of the participants claimed not to be **consciously** thinking about their devices.

研究发现，当他们的手机在另一个房间而不是在附近时，无论是否能看得见手机、手机是否开机，他们的表现都要好得多。尽管大多数参与者

The illness had impaired his ability to think and concentrate. 这种疾病损害了他的思维能力和注意力。

merely ['mɪrli] *adv.* 仅仅，只不过

| The brain accounts for merely three per cent of body weight. 大脑仅占体重的 3%。

high-stakes *adj.* 高风险的

presence ['prezns] *n.* 存在，在场，

出席 | He hardly seemed to notice my presence. 他似乎没有注意到我在场。

visible ['vɪzəbl] *adj.* 看得见的，可

见的；明显的，能注意到的 | Most stars are not visible to the naked eye. 大多数星星肉眼看不见。

out of sight 在视野外，看不见 |

Karen waved until the car was out of sight. 卡伦不断挥手，直到汽车再也看不见了。

hold true 适用，有效 | The

results appear to hold true for other countries. 这些结果在其他国家似乎同样正确。

consciously ['kɒnʃəsli] *adv.* 有意

识地；有意地，故意地 | I wasn't consciously trying to upset you. 我并不是故意要惹你不高兴的。

proximity [prə:k'sɪməti] *n.* 接

近，靠近 | We chose the house for its proximity to the school. 我们选中这所房子是因为它离学校近。

contribute to 是……的原因，有

助于 | Alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths a year in the US. 在

声称自己并没有有意识地去想他们的手机，但这一结果仍然成立。

The mere **proximity** of a phone, it seems, **contributes to** “**brain drain**”. Our brains may be **subconsciously** hard at work in **inhibiting** the desire to check our phones, or constantly monitoring the environment to see if we should check our phone (eg, waiting for a notification). Either way, this **diverted** attention can make doing anything else more difficult. The only “fix”, the researchers found, was putting the device in a different room entirely.

仅仅是靠近手机似乎就会导致“脑力损耗”。我们的大脑可能在潜意识里努力抑制查看手机的欲望，或者始终留心着我们是否应该查看手机（比方说等待出现通知）。不管怎样，分心会让你做其他事情变得更困难。研究人员发现，唯一的“解决办法”是把手机完全放在另一个房间。

美国，饮酒每年造成 10 万人死亡。

brain drain （国家的）人才流失，智囊枯竭

subconsciously [ˌsʌbˈkɔːnʃəsli]
adv. 下意识地，潜意识里

inhibit [ɪnˈhɪbɪt] v. 阻止，抑制；
使拘束，使尴尬 | Economic growth has been inhibited by the lack of investment. 经济增长由于缺乏投资而受到抑制。

divert [daɪˈvɜːrt] v. 转移注意力，
使分心；使转向，使绕道；改变（资金、材料等）的用途 | They want to divert the attention of the people from the real issues. 他们想要把人们的注意力从真正的问题上转移开。

➤ 脉络梳理

- Para. 1-2 指出人们在手机上耗费了大量的时间，频繁查看手机
- Para. 3-6 分析手机对大脑产生的负面影响，并举相关研究为例进行论证
- Para. 7 指出要避免手机分散自己的注意力，唯一的办法是彻底远离手机

➤ 长难句拆解

the more ... the more ... 结构

The more we use them, the more we lay neural pathways in our brains

定语从句，修饰 neural pathways

that lead to pick up our phones for whatever task is at hand

让步状语从句

– and the more we feel an urge to check our phone even when we don't have to.