(Approx. 827 words)

Freshly Squeezed Review

It’s all in the mind, y’know

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You pay close attention to what and how much you eat and drink. You work out religiously several times per week. How often do you exercise your grey matter?

Three years ago, I found there's an app for that. I’ve have been dutifully using it ever since and the app keeps getting better and better. I thought it well worth a revisit.

> Elevate is a new type of cognitive training tool designed to build communication and analytical skills. Elevate has been selected by Apple as the App of the Year. Since launching in May 2014, Elevate has been downloaded more than 25 million times on the App Store and Google Play.

[Elevate]([https://www.elevateapp.com](https://www.elevateapp.com/)) runs your brain through a range of exercises from grammar to math and all variations in between. There are dozens of exercises with a game-like quality that will keep on challenging you, raising the bar as you improve your skillset.

You can customize your daily training focus, choosing between 3 to 5 games from a stable of 35+ games. If you’d like, you can measure your performance against yourself and others. Immediately, it doesn’t take long to separate your weaknesses from your strengths.

Elevate collaborated with an independent research company and an independent analyst in four key skill groups.

Elevate users trained using our app during a four-week period, after which the Elevate users and the control group took identical post-tests.

* Our analyst found that Elevate users improved 69% more than non-users, and the more they played Elevate, the better their results.
* Over time, I have found that my strength lies in grammar but (although not terrible) I need to work on my mathematical aptitude.

The first thing that you’ll notice is that the exercises are challenges yet simultaneously feel like games. Not in a Mario Bros. sense but sophisticated. This owes in great part to the different and inventive UIs for each exercise. And they challenge you more as you grow more proficient in any particular category.

Example: One of the math challenges has you calculate the average of two numbers, at first. As you become more proficient, the app ups you to three numbers, and then four. Then they toss you a curve. Instead of just whole numbers, they figure decimals into your calculations.

The one math exercise that I felt had the most interesting twist was Subtraction. I struggled at first but the app points out the easiest method to obtain the correct answer after it has detected a pattern to what you’re doing wrong. What was fascinating was that for the first several months, the equations were laid out vertically, like this:

1945

-732

It was easy to concoct methodologies to arrive at your answer speedily. But then came the twist. Once you became proficient with this arrangement, they then presented the equations horizontally:

1945 - 732 = ?

Surprisingly, it tossed me for a loop. I had to ditch all of my previous visual cues and start anew. You wouldn’t think it would be that hard but it was returning to square one.

I have recently discovered another category: punctuation. The first exercise dealing with commas, when they should be removed and where they should be added.

The same can be said for their grammar exercises. They’ll provide you with two sentences with a word or two missing. You’re presented with the choice of two options to complete the sentences. But once you’ve become competent at spotting the correct or incorrect phrase competence at that level, the options are upped to three.

Another grammar exercise requires you to decide whether a phrase is correct or not. In the beginning, they highlight the phrase to make it easier to focus on. Once you have proven agile at recognizing a phrase is proper or improper, they then remove the highlighting and you have to focus on the entire paragraph.

At the end of each exercise, Elevate tells you how your performance ranked overall of all the times you trained with that exercise.

After a session of five games, you will receive a brief overview of how you are progressing in those categories, how you compare to all Elevate users in a specific topic such as grammar, and how many consecutive days you have completed.

All-in-all, Elevate is a challenging collection of exercises that will help you achieve your top form mentally. And the developers keep on introducing new ones.

Elevate is available for free on the iOS store. There are in-app  [various subscriptions](<https://apps.apple.com/US/app/id875063456#?platform=ipad>) you can purchase. Unfortunately, you’re told the fees but not which apply to which devices or their duration (one month, one year, lifetime, etc.).

Still, if you are as serious about staying in shape mentally as physically, I still encourage you to give Elevate a bash. You’ll bash it at least twice if you’re smart or want to be.