

THE MYTH: MOST PEOPLE USE ONLY 10% OF THEIR BRAIN POWER



TRUE OR FALSE?

This myth is, unfortunately, false. There is no evidence to suggest that only 10% of the brain is being used, and the popularity of the myth is largely based on the fact that people like the idea of being able to access more brain power.

WHY NOT?

- According to evolution, leaving 90% of the brain unused would be extremely costly
- Losing less than 90% of the brain to an accident nearly always has catastrophic consequences
- No area of the brain can be destroyed by strokes or head trauma without severely harming functioning
- Unused brain tissue is unlikely to remain unused for long



HOW DO WE KNOW?

- Electroencephalograms (EEG)
- Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
- Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI)

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

- Media
- Advertisements
- Self-help books
- Psychics



WHY IS IT SO POPULAR?

- People like to imagine that they have untapped brain power to use
- Promoted by the media and self-help books
- Authors misunderstandings of scientific papers by early brain researchers

WHERE DID IT START?

The myth possibly started with William James; he stated that he doubted that the average person achieves more than 10% of their intellectual potential. This claim was then incorrectly repeated by "positive thinking gurus" as being 10% of the brain, not 10% of potential.

