

Surgeons Who Are Gamers Are More Skilled

Ever wonder what surgeons do in their downtime, or if they play video games?

According to a recent study, surgeons who are gamers may be more skilled than their peers who don't play. It turns out that time at the console isn't just fun and games. The study, published in the February 2017 issue of Archives of Surgery, indicates that gaming can help surgeons hone skills that truly count in their field of expertise – performing a precise technique.

Video game skills translated into higher scores on a surgical skills test, the study found.

Out of 33 surgeons from Beth Israel Medical Center in New York who participated in the study, nine doctors played video games at least three hours per week. Those nine doctors:

- made 37% fewer errors
- performed 27% faster
- scored 42% better in the test of surgical skills

This is compared with the 15 surgeons who never played video games. The study does not mention what levels of benefits are shown by the doctors who play less than three hours per week.

This study supports past research that video games can improve fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, visual attention, depth perception, and computer competency.

Many of today's surgeons grew up when video games first became popular – arcade video games, gaming consoles, and home computer

games. Some may see gaming as a hobby or a waste of time, but research indicates that the “training” surgeons received through video games may have provided them with a foundation for perfecting crucial skills in the operating room.

That being said, one must also consider the negative aspects of video gaming. Excessive gaming in adolescents has been associated with poor mental and physical health, as well as poor academic performance. In other words, you can't train for surgery if you can't make it to medical school!
