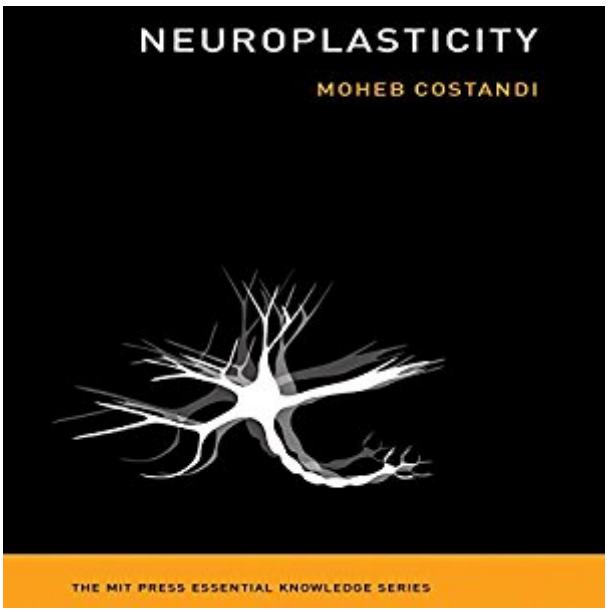
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Neuroplasticity: The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series



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Synopsis

Fifty years ago, neuroscientists thought that a mature brain was fixed like a fly in amber, unable to change. Today, we know that our brains and nervous systems change throughout our lifetimes. This concept of neuroplasticity has captured the imagination of a public eager for self-improvement - and has inspired countless Internet entrepreneurs who peddle dubious "brain training" games and apps. In this book, Moheb Costandi offers a concise and engaging overview of neuroplasticity for the general listener, describing how our brains change continuously in response to our actions and experiences. Costandi discusses key experimental findings, and describes how our thinking about the brain has evolved over time. He explains how the brain changes during development, and the "synaptic pruning" that takes place before brain maturity. He shows that adult brains can grow new cells (citing, among many other studies, research showing that sexually mature male canaries learn a new song every year). He describes the kind of brain training that can bring about improvement in brain function. It’s not gadgets and games that promise to "rewire your brain" but such sustained cognitive tasks as learning a musical instrument or a new language. (Costandi also notes that London cabbies increase their gray matter after rigorous training in their city’s complicated streets.) He tells how brains compensate after stroke or injury; describes addiction and pain as maladaptive forms of neuroplasticity; and considers brain changes that accompany childhood, adolescence, parenthood, and aging. Each of our brains is custom-built. Neuroplasticity is at the heart of what makes us human.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Congratulations to Moheb Costandi! He has produced an elegantly written book that concisely presents the concepts central to an educated discussion of neuroplasticity and situates them in many of the domains of concerned to neuroscientists and the layperson. It completely stays away from the hyperbole that surrounds popular press usage of the term. Instead it provides the reader with a basic understanding of the field and its history. I was especially impressed by what he chose to present and how clearly he described the central concepts and issues. It should especially valuable to students wanting to study neuroscience but are initially blown away by the details of the field and to the layperson that wishes to gain a basic understanding of this broad field. This book is a home run!

Very interesting and insightful read. However it is heavy on industry terminology and definitely not for your usual layperson - you will need to look words up in dictionary once in a while.

This is a really good book. When I did my medical training, we learned (what I now realize are) relatively simple models of neuronal function with fairly little on neuroplasticity. Constandi has an outstanding discussion of the physiology of neuronal plasticity, and a useful discussion of its implications. Well worth the read.

Highly recommended! Written for the general public but still very thorough and very up-to-date incorporating the most recent research and thinking on this fascinating subject.

A particularly well written item in an excellent series.

I want to learn more and more about neuroplasticity. This is a great introduction. The field is powerful, and the MIT resource whets your appetitie for more.

Dense first half lightweight second half

Excellent -very well written and informed. The author provides a comprehensive review of the basics of neuroplasticity.

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