

Red Light Therapy Shows Promise in Protecting Football Players' Brains

In a small, new study, college football players who used a special red light device during their entire season saw no increase in brain inflammation and injury over 16 weeks.

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A small , new study suggests **red light therapy may help protect athletes from brain damage caused by repeated hits.**

Researchers followed **26 college football players** over a full season.

Half used a red light device — a headset with a small nasal clip — that delivered **infrared light through the skull** three times a week for **20 minutes per session**. The rest used a placebo.

MRI scans taken before and after the season showed a clear difference.

Players in the placebo group developed **significant increases in brain inflammation** over 16 weeks.

Players who received active red light therapy **did not** — with researchers saying **nearly all regions of the brain appeared protected.**

The lead author says, “My first reaction was, *there’s no way this can be real, That’s how striking it was.*”

Repeated impacts — even without a diagnosed concussion — are believed to trigger microscopic brain injury and inflammation that can build over time.

That process is thought to contribute to **CTE**, or chronic traumatic encephalopathy — a degenerative brain disease found after death in **more than 100 former NFL players.**

Researchers believe the red light penetrates the skull just enough to **reduce**

inflammatory activity in the brain.

They stress this was a **small, early study**, not a cure — but larger trials are already underway, including a **300-person study** involving veterans and first responders.

Source: [Journal of Neurotrauma](#)

Author Affiliations: University of Utah School of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai