CALENDAR

FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

Unless otherwise noted, for information:
Ashley Knoch at 412-648-9059 or akk57@pitt.edu

CLASS OF 2017 GRADUATION CEREMONY
MAY 22, 4 P.M.
Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum
For information:
Rhonda Matthews at 412-648-9674 or rmatthews@medschool.pitt.edu

PITT IS IT IN PHILADELPHIA
JUNE 1, 6 P.M.
Kimpton Hotel Monaco Philadelphia
For information:
Sue George at 412-624-4658 or sgg7@pitt.edu

WHITE COAT CEREMONY
AUGUST 13, 3 P.M.
Scaife Hall, Auditoriums 5 & 6
Reception immediately following in the Petersen Events Center Lobby

ORIENTATION LUNCHEON FOR THE INCOMING CLASS
AUGUST 18, 11:30 A.M.
Location TBD

MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REUNION WEEKEND
SEPTEMBER 15–16
Reunion Classes:
1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012

HEALTH SCIENCES ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION
SEPTEMBER 2017
Los Angeles, Calif.
For Information:
Rachel Edman at 412-864-1957 or rge6@pitt.edu

HOMECOMING TAILGATE
OCTOBER 14 (three hours before kick-off)
Location TBD

PITT MED ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION
NOVEMBER 4
Boston, Mass.

To find out what else is happening at the medical school, visit health.pitt.edu and maa.pitt.edu.



GETTY IMAGES



FOR REAL! TWEEN SCIENCE

Think fast! **If a baseball is headed for your head, your brain must process that and respond appropriately, and all this happens in a fraction of a second.**

The time it takes for neural circuitry to do its part depends on a few things: the number of neurons in the brain message pathway (travel distance), the length of the neurons, and the neuron's degree of myelination (sort of a turbo boost). Myelin acts as a blanket of insulation that wraps around segments of neurons for faster relay of information. In between each section of myelin are uncovered sections called nodes of Ranvier. (No, that's not a mountain chain from a Tolkien novel.) As brain signals are transmitted, they jump from node to node along the long, thread-like part of the neuron called the axon. And that allows messages to arrive faster, sometimes at speeds of up to 268 miles per hour.

In our teens and 20s, our bodies enter the big leagues. They are pruning and myelinating brain connections into extra innings. All that revamping allows the brain to work many times faster than when we're little kids.

Ever notice that some elite hitters are at the top of their game just before they retire? That's because of another key player: prediction. From the mound, things happen so fast that a hitter only has the first few milliseconds of the pitcher's release to judge what's coming next. Experience teaches hitters how to read pitchers' cues. That's why some of the best batters get better with age. ***—Kylie Wolfe***

Thank you to Alan Sved, professor and chair of neuroscience, who helped his student and our intern, Kylie Wolfe, think about all of this.

Is there a topic you'd like For Real! to explore? Drop us a line: medmag@pitt.edu