



Staying Sharp: Keeping Your Brain Active

Contrary to popular belief, confusion and memory loss is not a normal part of the aging process. While you might find yourself nervous when you forget what you walked into a room for, or when you cannot remember where you put your glasses, major memory issues are not just par for the aging course. Instead, your brain is an amazing thing that is capable of learning new things, and producing new brain cells, at any age. When it comes to keeping memory issues at bay for as long as possible, the phrase “use it or lose it” rings true. Here are a few of our favorite ways to add brain games into your regular day and keep your memory sharp.

Take a new route

We are creatures of habit by nature, but when we find ourselves doing the same thing over and over again, our brain no longer has to actively think about it. Fight off a lazy brain by taking a new route at least once per day. Make your brain think by driving a new way to the grocery store or taking some different streets on your morning walk. If you aren't leaving the house, try switching up the way you normally walk from your bedroom to the living room for a cup of coffee. Any time you can deviate from your normal routine, your brain does what it is intended to do – think!



Switch hands

Speaking of routine, it can be easy to fall into habits without even realizing that you can switch it up for a better brain workout. An easy way to incorporate new learning into your daily routine is to switch to your less dominant hand for some activities. Brush your teeth with your opposite hand, or pour milk with your other hand. You might be surprised just how difficult this can be, which means that you are definitely giving your brain a work out.

Cross your body

You may have heard the term “crossing the midline” and how it positively affects brain health by making the two sides of the brain communicate with one another. It is important that people over the age of 65 actively work on crossing the midline throughout their day, as older adults sometimes lose this skill. Crossing the midline essentially means taking an arm, leg, hand, or foot

and moving it across the imaginary line that divides the body in half horizontally or vertically. For example, sitting on a chair and touching your left foot with your right hand would be crossing the midline, as would be touching your right shoulder with your left hand. Make it a habit to cross your midline throughout your day – try to do it while cooking dinner or when you wake up.

Walk

Any kind of exercise is great for your body and your brain, but you don't need to run marathons to get the benefits. Instead, focus on walking for at least 20 to 30 minutes per day. Not only will you benefit from the cardiovascular exercise, your brain will be getting a workout listening to the sounds and seeing the sights from your walk. Drink plenty of water before and after your walk to keep your body hydrated and your brain working at top condition as well.

Know when to get help

If your memory loss issues are more than you think is normal, or if you are finding that you are becoming confused and unable to figure out the world around you, head to your doctor.

Memory issues can be the sign of something serious happening in your body, and the sooner you are seen and treated, the faster you can start using adaptive techniques or medications. If you find yourself needing extra help around home, [our Visiting Angels](#) are experienced with working with clients who exhibit varying levels of memory loss and confusion. We are ready to partner with you and increase your quality of life.

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