Use It or Lose It: Keeping Your Brain Fit

Any type of regular mental activities will help keep your mind sharp and alert, while reducing the risk or delaying the onset of age-related dementia.

Most people attribute poor brain functionality and memory loss with age. Although age can have an impact on the brain, the main cause for brain decline tends to be its lack of use. As we age, we tend to use our brain less frequently. As a result of the brain not being challenged, it gradually deteriorates.

Your brain needs mental exercise to stay active, just as your body needs physical exercise to stay fit. Develop a “mind workout” routine into your day just like you would develop a physical exercise schedule. Here are some simple activities to help improve cognitive skills:

**Everyday Activities** Sometimes, brain fitness can be as simple as doing something routinely do but in a different way. For example, use the opposite hand to brush your teeth or to dial a telephone.

**Conversation** One of the most important and easiest mental exercises is to engage in meaningful conversation. As we age, we tend to withdraw from social interaction, giving fewer opportunities to talk about things important to us. By giving opinions and advice on situations, your mind becomes stimulated.

**Get Curious** Stimulate your brain by challenging it to learn something new. Learn a new skill or language. Choose a subject each week and learn everything you can about that one subject. Use a dictionary and look up a random word. Attend cultural events to engage your curiosity.

**Games** Mental puzzles and brain games are simple and fun. Games such as brain teasers, crossword puzzles, board games and Sudoku are fun and easy ways to keep the brain active and help with thinking and processing. Turn over to the next page to get started on some games in this newsletter!

The human brain is a pattern-seeking device. Patterns that are repeated overtime become programs. The key is to remain playful with life and don’t allow the brain to stop thinking. Be curious. Be attentive. Learn something new. Engage the senses. Smile and enjoy each moment!
Play With Your Mind!

Get started with your “mind workout” routine with some of the games below.

Math Whiz
Using eight eights and addition only, can you make 1000? (Answer below)

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8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 = 1000
\]

Stroop Test
Test your attention by using the stroop test. Read out loud the colour the word is printed in rather than the text of the word. For example, if the text is the word red, but the word red is printed in the colour blue, then the correct response is blue.

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red  green  blue  black  brown
green  black  brown  blue  red
red  brown  blue  green  black
blue  red  black  green  brown
black  green  brown  red  blue
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We want to hear from you!

If you like this month’s newsletter or have feedback for future editions, please write to us at the address below (Attn: Cindy Tsoi) or email cindy.tsoi@tcare.ca. Thank you!