

Time to exercise your brain!

The brain is the most complex organ of the body. It regulates multiple bodily functions, interprets incoming sensory information, and processes our emotions. It is also the seat of memory, intelligence, and creativity.

Although the brain gets plenty of exercise every day, certain activities may help boost brain function and connectivity. This in turn may help protect the brain from age-related degeneration and help you to up your game. Here are a few things to consider:

- **Play games** Several studies have found a link between playing games and a decreased risk of cognitive impairment in older adults. Plus ... it's fun! You get to know your friends better. You'll laugh. It's all good.
- **Do crossword and other puzzles** Crossword puzzles are a popular activity that may stimulate the brain. Sudoku is a very popular mind game. Doing jigsaw puzzles regularly and throughout life may protect against the effects of brain aging.
- **Play chess or checkers** Studies have shown that chess, checkers, and other cognitive leisure activities may lead to improvements in memory, executive functioning, which is the ability to monitor and adapt behavior in order to meet set goals, and information processing speed.
- **Socialize** People with more frequent social contact are less likely to experience cognitive decline and dementia. So have those discussions, volunteer, and get together with old friends
- **Learn new skills** Be a lifelong learner. Take classes, and join groups. Read.
- **Increase your personal vocabulary** Increasing one's vocabulary range is a great way to broaden knowledge while exercising the brain.
- **Exercise regularly** Regular physical exercise is beneficial for both the brain and the body. Exercise improves memory, cognition, and motor coordination.
- **Sleep** While not necessarily an active exercise, sleep is crucial for both the brain and the body. And most people just don't get enough of it. Getting adequate sleep has been proven to boost memory recall, reduce mental fatigue, and regulate metabolism.