

SPA *living*®

September 2014

Learn why you should give your brain a boost

Late August and early September have traditionally been associated with going back to school. You don't have to be enrolled in a classroom, though, to take it upon yourself to learn new things. In fact, giving your brain a boost is one of the keys to healthy aging and may help fend off conditions like Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, mental decline as you age appears to be largely due to altered connections among brain cells. They suggest, however, that by keeping your brain active, you can strengthen your brain and build your reserves of brain cells and connections.

Working out your brain is easier than you may think. In fact, you might be doing a few of these tips already!

Make time for exercise

Don't underestimate the importance of physical activity for your mental health. Physical activity increases the blood flow throughout your body – including to your brain. While it's well-known that regular physical exercise can reduce your risk for certain conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, the Alzheimer's Association advises that preventing those diseases and other cardiovascular conditions also reduces your risk for Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

Just like regular physical exercise, it's also important to directly stimulate your mind on a daily basis. Working on a crossword puzzle or reading the daily newspaper is an easy way to incorporate mental stimulation into your daily routine. Playing games and solving puzzles are great ways

to keep your mind active while doing something you find enjoyable. (Hint: Try out the Word Find in this newsletter!)

Learn new tricks

Whoever said, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" clearly wasn't aware of the brain-bolstering benefits of learning something new. Challenging yourself to learn a new skill can stimulate new areas within your brain and grow more connections among brain cells, according to the Geriatric Mental Health Foundation (GMHF). Reap the benefits of a stronger, smarter brain by enrolling in a class, attending lectures or learning to play a musical instrument.

Focus on brain-healthy foods

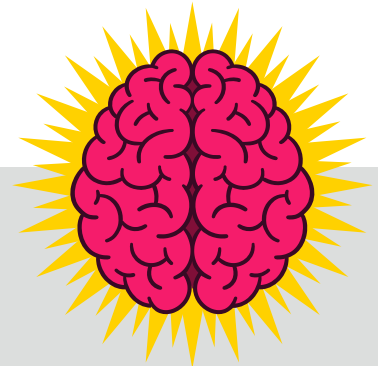
The Alzheimer's Association recommends adopting a brain-healthy diet; meaning a diet that reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes, encourages good blood flow to the brain, and is low in fat and cholesterol. Work on incorporating more antioxidant rich, dark-skinned fruits and vegetables into your diet, like kale, spinach, broccoli, prunes and blueberries.

Keep up with social connections

Another important aspect of maintaining your brain vitality is to become or continue to be active socially. Social activities most beneficial to your brain are those that also keep you active mentally or physically. Keep your mind sharp and maintain your social connections by joining a bridge club, participating in a dance class or becoming involved with a volunteer group.

While there are some risk factors you cannot change that may impact your

likelihood to develop certain brain-related diseases or disorders, the Alzheimer's Association suggests that adopting a brain-healthy lifestyle might help delay or prevent the onset of these diseases. However, also remember that it's important to talk with your physician if you experience any changes or have concerns about your cognitive abilities.

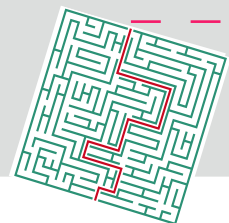


Give your brain a workout with these great resources for online games and puzzles:

AARP Online Games
<http://games.aarp.org>

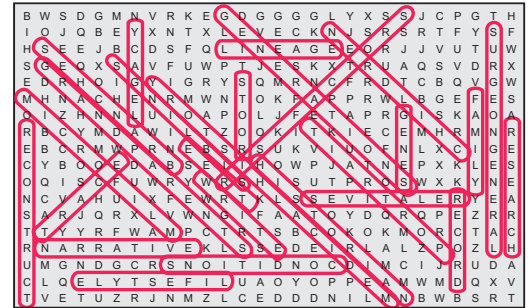
NY Times Crossword Puzzle
<http://www.nytimes.com/crosswords>

Games for the Brain
<http://gamesforthebrain.com>



September Word Search: Boosting your brain

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| ACTIVE | CROSSWORD | PUZZLES |
| ANTIOXIDANT | DANCE | READING |
| BOOST | DEMENTIA | SCHOOL |
| BRAIN | DIET | SKILLS |
| BRIDGE | EXERCISE | SMARTER |
| CARDS | GAMES | SOCIAL |
| CLASSROOM | HEALTHY | SOLVE |
| COGNITIVE | LEARN | STIMULATE |
| CONNECTIONS | NEWSPAPER | TRICKS |



August Word Search Key



Holiday spotlight

Celebrate National Rehabilitation Awareness Week!

National Rehabilitation Awareness Week will be held this year from September 21-27. During this weeklong observance, many Genesis Rehab Services team members will raise awareness for the many benefits of physical, occupational, speech and respiratory therapy. Keep an eye out in your building for health fairs, open houses, posters, bulletin boards, and activities to help you learn more about the power of rehab.

