



Live Oak Caregivers

Caring Connection

Exercising The Mind

Normal aging causes brain functions to change. Over time, healthy individuals experience the decline of some cognitive ability. Small declines in the area of memory, both visual and verbal, may occur along with some short-term memory loss. The more exercise the brain gets, the better it is at processing information. Memory exercises for seniors can help short- and long-term recall.

Puzzles

Crossword puzzles are one of the most effective memory exercises. Other puzzles are likewise beneficial. The American Health Assistance Foundation's (AHA) Alzheimer's Disease Research program recommends playing Sudoku to exercise the brain and help memory and cognitive functioning. Sudoku is similar to a crossword puzzle, but numbers are used instead of words. The puzzle is a grid of nine squares across and nine squares down. Each row across and down must have only one of each consecutive number through 9. Each block of cells must also only contain one of each number up to 9. Sudoku doesn't require any math skills or calculations. It is a logic puzzle, and can be found in the newspaper, online or in many puzzle books.

Sensory Stimulation

One way to stimulate brain function is by sensory data stimulation. Involving all five senses in an experience will stimulate and wake up the brain. Listen to some beautiful music, taste something delicious, look at something amazing, touch something incredibly soft and light a scented candle for a pleasing aroma to smell. Using and paying attention to sensory stimulus will stimulate and heighten sensory memory and awareness.

Card Games

Playing card games regularly such as Poker, Solitaire, Hearts, Rummy and Go Fish exercises the brain and may delay memory loss associated with aging and dementia along with helping to maintain brain vitality, according to the American Academy of Neurology.

Reading

Reading will exercise the brain and help in word recall. Reading the newspaper, books or magazines has been shown to provide a brain boost. In a memory and aging study, Dr. Yonas Geda, a neuropsychiatrist at the Mayo Clinic, found that engaging in cognitive activities such as reading can prevent future memory loss. The 2009 study also found that seniors who play games, work on the computer or participate in crafts such as pottery or quilting had a 30 to 50 percent decrease in memory loss compared with people who did not participate in those activities.

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Imagine

When you use your imagination, you exercise your brain. Curiosity is one of the most stimulating exercises for the brain, according to the Franklin Institute. You can stimulate the imagination just by thinking while you're out for your daily walk. Imagine how you would landscape your neighbor's yard, or try to guess the names of flowers, shrubs or plants you see every day on your walk around the block.

Neurobics

Exercise your mind for free with neurobics. Neurobics are exercises that develop and enhance the five senses. For example, try buttoning your shirt or tying your shoes with your eyes closed. Try eating with your non-dominant hand, or using the computer mouse with your left hand instead of your right. Try eating a meal with a partner or friend without talking, only utilizing visual cues and gestures to express yourself or your wishes, suggests Lawrence Katz, professor of Neurobiology at Duke University Medical Center.

Discovery Challenge

Discover new skills or knowledge through reading books loaned from your local library. Engage the mind by learning a new language or hobby or craft, suggests Patricia Grady, PhD., Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, a component of the National Institutes of Health. Learning new skills or exercises can help to increase the brain's processing speed and engage cognitive thinking processes and skills.

Free Online Brain Games

Brain games that offer amusement as well as enhanced reasoning speed and capabilities may be found for free on the Internet. Memory games, math games and word games help to increase reasoning skills and potential. Such games can be found by typing in "Free brain games" into your favorite search bar. Many popular brain fitness websites offer a limited number of free games to the public that are easy to access on a daily basis.

Exercise

Physical exercise offers mental benefits as well. Increased blood flow and stimulation of the brain during exercise helps enhance brain health in seniors, according to the "Senior Journal." Strong blood vessels carry oxygen and nutrient-rich blood to the brain, necessary for optimal brain health and development, regardless of age.

Source: LiveStrong.com Read more at:

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/105984-memory-exercises-seniors/>