

Intellectual Wellness

STRENGTHENING COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Intellectual wellness is more than IQ or book smarts. Intellectual wellness involves the development and maintenance of creativity, critical thinking, and memory.

When we work on elevating our intellectual capabilities, our decision-making and problem-solving skills increase, and we become more adept at handling day-to-day challenges. We are able to look at life through a more creative lenses. As we learn to embrace out-of-the-box thinking and approach challenges from different angles, our work efficacy increases.

Plus, as we learn more about our world and become curious about the inner workings of our individual interests, our minds open to new possibilities. We begin to see how the ideas of others develop, which can lead us to becoming more open-minded.



Reading

Reading is probably the most well-known way to increase intellectual wellness. It exposes us to new ideas, increases our knowledge, and allows our imagination to bring stories and characters to life. It also challenges us to increase our vocabulary and to learn about the world, history, and our various interests. This summer, we challenge you to read one new book outside of your comfort zone. To help you get started, here are a few different reading lists.

American Classics:

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

The Catcher in the Rye by John Steinbeck

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Nonfiction:

Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo

Far From the Tree by Andrew Solomon

The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan

The Sea Around Us by Rachel Carson

British Classics:

Middlemarch by George Eliot

To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte



Cognitive "Brain" Training

Cognitive or "brain" training has become a popular and lucrative industry when it comes to intellectual health. But is it helpful? The jury is still out on that question. Here is what we know.

Memory and cognitive function games such as Luminosity or Posit Science have become a more active part of the brain training scene. When a person actively and regularly participates in these games, there are measurable results. We can see an increase in memory retention, perceptual speed, and comprehension skills. But just like in going to the gym, one must participate in these games and "level up" regularly in order to retain these new, strengthened skills; otherwise, declines have been seen to happen in as quickly as 3 months.

There is still a lot of research that needs to be done to understand how these games affect the brain in the long term and if they are an effective means of "training" our brains to better handle the effects of aging. But research has shown some gains. So, can it hurt to try and strengthen these regions of the brain? We will leave that to you to decide.

Games To Try:

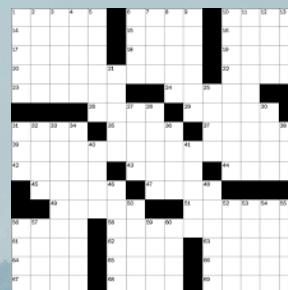
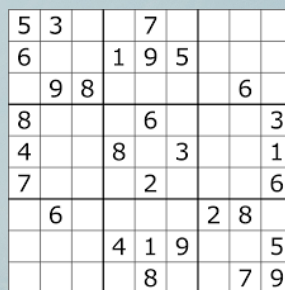
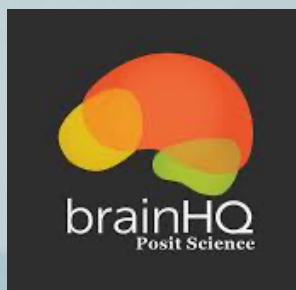
Lumosity

Posit Science

Sudoku

Crosswords

Elevate



Get Outdoors, Exercise, and Socialize

Executive function is the brain's ability to plan, remember, and focus. It is the process in which we are able to execute multiple tasks while adapting to changing environments. Executive function is crucial in our daily lives as we use it to prioritize, create and achieve goals, and control impulses. Recent studies have shown that physical activity and specifically walking everyday will increase executive function in adults. When we exercise, our brain basically comes to life and we are able to think clearer and make connections easier. This means new ideas form and we can gather and interpret information faster and with more ease.

This also happens when we socialize and have regular interactions with others. It is well accepted in the scientific community that human interaction is necessary for adequate brain development. This does not change as we age. In order to continue to expand our minds, to engage and strengthen them, we need personal human interaction.

This summer, we will be partnering with Utah State University to host monthly walks and hikes. We will also be hosting Corporate Games this summer. These events are a great way to get outside, socialize, and get those neurons firing through physical activity.



Creativity

According to Robert Sternberg, there are three types of intelligences: analytical, practical, and creative. Analytical intelligence focuses on academic problem solving; practical intelligence is your "common sense;" and creative intelligence is your imaginative and innovative problem solving.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Increasing creativity can help increase both job performance and job satisfaction. When we use creativity to problem solve, we get results that innovate and inspire. So, how do we increase creativity? Here are some ideas:

- ~ Learn a musical instrument
- ~ Get outside
- ~ Have a discussion with someone about views that are different than yours
- ~ Take an art class
- ~ Learn to bake or cook
- ~ Doodle during meetings

"Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else ever thought."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Creativity happens when you come up with an idea that is original, useful, and surprising. Thus, creativity is thinking outside of the box, and it is so important when trying to strengthen our mind.

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while."

STEVE JOBS