

# Exercises to Strengthen Your Mind



While you might know that you need to exercise your body, did you know that it might also be important to exercise your mind? You have probably heard the old adage "use it or lose it." Many researchers do believe that this maxim applies to your brain health. Research suggesting that certain types of activities can be beneficial for your brain's health.

# Take Care of Your Body to Take Care of Your Mind



Research has shown that people who engage in healthy behaviours such as exercise and proper nutrition are less susceptible to the cognitive declines associated with the aging process. Researchers looked at the participants' behaviours and cognitive abilities starting in middle age tracked their progress throughout old age.

These healthy behaviours included not smoking, maintaining a healthy BMI, regularly exercising, consuming lots of vegetables and fruits, and consuming a low to moderate amount of alcohol.

So, if you want to build a better mind, start by working on your physical health first. Go for a walk, start incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet, and try to give up any bad habits like excessive alcohol consumption or tobacco use. Some of these might be more difficult than others, but your brain will thank you for years to come.

Exercising the brain is something that we do every day and often don't realise that we are doing it. Try some of these activities. You might find some things easier than others.

# Draw a Map of Your Town From Memory



While you might feel like you can navigate the streets of where you live with your eyes closed, try challenging your brain by actually drawing a map of your town where you live from memory. No cheating! Try to include major streets, major side streets, and local landmarks. Just try to remember the street names.....

Once you are done, compare your memory map to a real map of the area. How did you do? You might be surprised by some of the things that you missed? If you found this activity too easy, try drawing a less familiar area from memory, such as a map of town where you work or a place that you are less familiar with.

Navigating your way to the supermarket or doctor's office might seem simple and almost automatic when you are behind the wheel of your car. However, forcing yourself to remember the layout of where you live as well as draw and label it helps activate a variety of areas of your brain.

## Learn Something New



This brain exercise requires a bit of commitment, but it is also one that just might give you the greatest reward. Learning something new is one way to keep your brain on its toes and continually introduce new challenges. Some things you might want to try include learning a new language, learning to play a musical instrument or learning a new

hobby. Not only will you be stretching your mind, but you will also be continually learning something new as you keep expanding your skills and becoming more accomplished.

# Try Using Your Non-Dominant Hand



An interesting brain exercise that you might find difficult.

Try switching hands while you are eating dinner or when you are trying to write something down. It will be difficult, but that is exactly the point.

The most effective brain activities are those that are not necessarily easy. Start with writing your name and do it ten times. Look how you register improvements so quickly.

# Socialise



Socialising tends to engage multiple areas of the brain and many social activities also include physical elements, such as playing a sport, that is also beneficial to your mind.

Even if you are someone who normally likes to keep to yourself, seeking social interactions can be beneficial to your

brain in both the short and long-term. Some ideas for staying socially engaged to include signing up for volunteer opportunities in your community, joining a club, signing up for a local walking group, and staying in close touch with your friends and family.

# Meditate

A brain exercise that has been in use for thousands of years but has recently gained considerable recognition for its effectiveness.



One brain exercise you might not have considered might actually be extremely effective – meditation.

More recently 'Mindfulness Meditation' has become widely used by so many people for different reasons.

Research has also shown that meditation can help improve attention, focus, empathy and even immunity. Studies also suggest that meditation might even increase the capacity of working memory.