

WHAT'S UP DOC PETE?

My memory is not as sharp as it once was. Do you have any suggestions?



Peter J. Muran, MD

On a recent plane flight, the passenger next to my wife, Sandy, introduced her to a game she was playing on a Nintendo. It looked like fun, so for her next flight, Sandy borrowed our son's Nintendo and bought the game called *Brain Age* for entertainment.

Sandy has been playing the various games in the program each day since then, it only takes a few minutes. Being the competitive person that she is, she likes how the program graphs her improvement. Some things she has learned are that her brain performs much better in the morning than at other times of the day, and distractions reduce her scores ... so much for the increased production myth of multi-tasking.

It is comforting to know that the brain is like a muscle, and even as we grow older, the more we exercise the brain, the better it performs. In addition to this game and others you can find on the internet, there are simple things you can do every day to enhance your brain function. Here are a few:

- If you go out for lunch, choose a new place at least once a week. Your brain enjoys variety. Also, changing your route to work will provide new stimulation.
- Try counting the strokes when you brush your teeth to activate your brain in the morning.
- While driving, try to read and memorize all of the signs along the road.
- Look at people on the street and try to guess how they are feeling, then describe their mood in your own words.
- While waiting for lunch, draw an object from your memory, like something in your home. Drawing images from your memory stimulates the creativity of the brain.
- Look at the objects around you and try to think of as many related verbs as you can.
- When you meet someone new, silently repeat their name three times and think "I am going to remember this" and you will.

Good luck with your brain exercise. Imagine biceps on your cortex. Listen this month to "**Quantum Health**" on KVEC, 920am, Saturday at 1:00 to learn more from the experts on brain health.



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