

Your Brain: Use It or Lose It

Your brain is like a muscle. It needs exercise—mental exercise—in order to stay strong and healthy. Studies show that our mental capacities are enhanced in the same way our physical capacities are. Mental ability is increased and maintained through activity; therefore, the worst thing you can do is stop using your mind.

Learning throughout your life not only increases your knowledge, but it also helps prevent Alzheimer's disease and other forms of mental atrophy. This makes stretching the brain through mental exercise especially important for older people. Routine and monotony are two of the greatest enemies of an active brain. They breed mental and emotional lethargy and a declining mental capacity.

Brain Fitness, a book by Monique Le Poncin, founder of the French National Institute for Research on the Prevention of Cerebral Aging, describes ways to increase and maintain mental capacity. Poncin writes that brain exercises can positively affect the mind after only a few weeks of practice, and you can do them anytime, anywhere. She suggests 5 areas of mental ability to exercise:



perceptive, visuospatial, structuralization, logic, and verbal.

Exercising your perceptive abilities involves all five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Every day, observe an object like a photograph or a person you pass on the street. Draw that image immediately. This exercises short-term memory. At the end of the week, redraw the seven objects or persons you have observed. This exercises long-term memory.

For smell and taste, when eating something you didn't prepare yourself, try to identify the ingredients in the dishes you are

served. Concentrate on the subtle flavorings of herbs and spices, then ask to find out what was actually used.

To exercise your hearing, practice recognizing callers on the telephone before they identify themselves. Or listen to the TV or radio at a lower volume than you usually do and try to follow everything being said. Exercise your sense of touch by trying to identify objects with your eyes closed using only your hands.

Look for ideas on exercising other areas of your mind throughout this issue. You'll have to use your brain, but that's a good thing!

Spiritual Social Physical Emotional Intellectual

Quick Facts

Mormon Television

Recipient of more than 125 patents for his inventions, Philo T. Farnsworth, a Mormon, was born on August 19, 1906. As a boy of 14 at nearby Rigby High School, Philo drew a model of his image dissector television on the blackboard during chemistry class.

Farnsworth went on to develop the first electronic television and is regarded as its rightful inventor. Ironically, he told his family, "We're not going to watch it in this household...I don't want it in your intellectual diet."

Presidential Firsts

On August 9, 1974, President Richard M. Nixon became the first U.S. president to resign from that office.

Vice President Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as president on the same day. Ford likewise experienced a presidential first as the first Vice President nominated to that office by the President under the terms of Section 2 of the 25th Amendment, which provides that the President nominate a Vice President whenever there is a vacancy.

In This Issue . . .

You Are What You Say	2
The Squeeze on Sports Drinks	3
Thymes & Seasons	4
Self-Image: the Good, the Bad, and it's Curable	5
Dehydration: Dangerous Ground	6

Mental Disabilities are not Social Disabilities

People with limited experience around mentally or learning disabled persons sometimes feel uncomfortable, not knowing what to expect or how to act around them. People with disabilities are not dangerous or harmful; on the contrary, they are people with feelings and ideas and should be treated as such. Becoming educated about such disorders and how to interact with them can help one to be more comfortable in social situations with people who have mental or learning disorders.

Lynn Anderson and Carla Brown Kress, authors of *Inclusion: Including People With Disabilities in Parks and Recreation Opportunities*, say that most people who are afflicted with learning disabilities suffer from being treated as if they are unintelligent. According to their book, “most people with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence.”

A learning disability can cause difficulty with spoken or written language, coordination, self-control, or attention. Anderson and Kress suggest providing positive reinforce-

ment. “Do not embarrass the participant by asking him or her to do a task that will draw attention to the disability.” Similarly, it is encouraged in social situations to “capitalize on the participant’s strengths, as the learning disability is not a pervasive disability.”

Mental disabilities are slightly more serious than learning disabilities and include such conditions as Down syndrome. Down syndrome occurs when the inexplicable development of a 47th chromosome, as opposed to the standard 46 in most human beings, leads to disorders in the brain and body. In social situations, Anderson and Kress suggest that you “treat the participant as you would treat anyone else...Do not treat them differently because they have a disability.”

The article further encourages that we “not treat an adult with mental retardation as a child.” To avoid uncomfortable social situations, ignore the effects of the disability as much as possible.

Many people feel uncomfortable interacting with mentally or learning disabled persons because they are afraid of offending or

embarrassing them. Avoiding social exposure to people with disabilities, however, is not the best way to interact with them, because it takes the opportunity to interact and make friends away from disabled people. Our responsibility is to find ways to include them and help them adjust to social situations.

Anderson and Kress suggest that people without disabilities “create a group norm that is more accepting of a wider range of behaviors that are not disruptive or harmful...Always challenge any damaging or disparaging remarks by others about mental illness...People with mental illness, no matter how serious the illness, are people first.”

When we learn to adjust to diverse social situations and better understand the needs and expectations of people with mental or learning disabilities, we can make social situations more comfortable for everyone. By educating ourselves, we can become more accommodating to people with disabilities, and we can avoid uncomfortable or offensive situations.

You Are What You Say

Your mother may have told you, “you are what you eat,” but did she ever tell you, “you are what you say”? The way we talk to and think about ourselves can greatly affect our behaviors, attitudes, and personalities. Your “self-talk,” or inner dialogue, affects and determines every emotion you feel, every word you say, and every decision you make. Learning to control your self-talk will enable you to control every aspect of your life.

Because your self-talk affects your moods and beliefs, you can use your thoughts to change your outlook. For example, if you tell yourself to look for the positive in situations, you will soon become a naturally positive person.

However, controlling your inner dialogue can be difficult. To start, try to monitor your thoughts and words as often as possible. This will give you an idea of how you think and what you can change.

You can implement three main steps to improve your self-talk. First, choose the words you use carefully. Each word you select will create either a negative or a positive feeling for you. Try to use words that make you feel positive.

Second, try not to become discouraged by minor setbacks. View them instead as opportunities to learn and keep growing.

Third, always talk about your circumstances positively. Think more about how you can make things positive than how difficult your struggles are.

Creating positive self-talk will not end disappointment. It will, however, enable you to handle daily stresses and obstacles. The self-mastery you gain from cultivating your inner dialogue will also increase your ability to manage your time and control your actions. Make what you are and what you say something that will encourage and uplift.

Exercise Your Visuospatial Abilities

Visuospatial abilities are related to the ability to make quick and accurate estimates of distances, areas, and volumes—the general proportions of things and their distribution in space. To test and exercise your own, try the following:

- When you walk into a room with a group of people in it, try to quickly determine how many are on your right and your left, as well as the left-right distribution of furniture and other objects.
- Observe objects—pens, for instance—and try to estimate their length and thickness.
- When you have visited somewhere and then return home, try to draw a plan or map of the place you have seen. Repeat this exercise the next day and the day after.

Meditation: A Window into the Spiritual Realm

For millennia human beings have sought to commune with a higher power. One commonly tread avenue of spiritual communion is meditation. Many world religions believe meditation to be essential to spiritual enlightenment and achievement. From the Buddha to the prophet Muhammed to the prophet Joseph Smith, the founders of many religions began their ministries as the direct result of insight that came to them through the process of meditation.

Even today, pious individuals, particularly followers of Eastern religions, practice meditation as part of their religious devotion. For example, Sikhs believe that focusing on the name of God brings God into their presence. Hindus, on the other hand, believe that salvation (evidenced by escape from the cycle of death and rebirth) comes

through the spiritual enlightenment that meditation offers.

Mormons are also encouraged to meditate. In 3 Nephi 17:3, Christ urges the people, “go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand.” Latter-day prophets continue to stress the importance of taking time to quietly consider our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with Jesus Christ and His teachings. It is through prayer and silent meditation that we receive personal revelation.

Although some religions may seem as different as night and day, their followers still hold one thing in common: meditation. Through careful reflection, devout souls the world over have gained peace and an increased level of spirituality.

Personal Revelation: Sacred, Still

It is hard to find the right words to describe the feelings we get when we receive personal revelation by the Spirit. Even the prophets in the scriptures seemed to have trouble finding the right words to describe their feelings. Perhaps this is because of the sacred nature of the Holy Ghost and His mission to testify of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. But no matter what the reason, all people are entitled to the beautiful gift of personal revelation.

The scriptures often use the word *voice* to describe the promptings of the Spirit, but even that is limited in describing the perfect, delicate, and refined communication we feel.

The prophet Joseph Smith said that revelation is a spiritual process through which pure intelligence can flow into our minds and we can know what we need to know without the drudgery of study or the passage of time.

The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting, and only if we have prepared ourselves and are anxious to heed the promptings, will we be able to receive them. Occasionally, the feeling presses firmly enough to get our immediate attention, but usually the Spirit speaks in gentle tones and through tender emotions.

Often these promptings are for our own edification, instruction, or correction. But because they can be quite personal, it is often best to keep these special and sometimes unusual experiences to ourselves, only sharing them when prompted to do so by the Spirit.

You cannot force spiritual things, but when they come, we should be ready to listen and obey. It is not wise to wrestle with the revelations of the Spirit with such insistence as to demand immediate answers or blessings to your liking. You can create a climate to foster growth, to nourish and protect. In this way you will grow closer to the Spirit.

We have been given light, intelligence, and the scriptures to help guide us through this life. We need to be up and about our duty. Revelation will not replace the spiritual or temporal knowledge we have already attained. Revelation will, however, enhance that knowledge and provide greater understanding of God’s nature and His divine plan.

The Squeeze on Sports Drinks

Advertisers flash images of toned bodies guzzling sports drinks as thirst-quenchers to entice consumers. But are sports drinks really beneficial to the body? The fact is, it depends on how active the athlete is.

The carbohydrate is the most efficient source of energy. During active exercise, carbohydrates can be depleted at a rate of three to four grams per minute. If the duration of exercise lasts more than two hours, massive amounts of carbohydrates will be burned. This loss will result in a reduced ability to perform.

By consuming carbohydrates before, during, and after strenuous exercise, an athlete can help prevent blood glucose levels from falling too low. Because pasta, potatoes, and even energy bars cannot reasonably be consumed while exercising, sports drinks provide a good means of acquiring those necessary carbs.

As the active athlete sweats, essential electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium evaporate from the body. Electrolytes serve functions in the body by

providing essential minerals, controlling osmosis, and maintaining an acid-base balance essential for regular cellular activities.

The theory behind sports drinks is that by packing them with electrolyte replacements, the body of the athlete will retain more fluid than if water were consumed. Sodium, the most common ingredient in sports drinks, is particularly helpful in fluid absorption.

It is important to understand that studies have shown sports drinks effective for the active athlete who participates in continual strenuous exercise. But for even an avid runner participating in a race lasting under an hour, a simple drink of water would be as good as any sports drink. However, water will save you two things that sports drinks will not: calories and money.

Sports drink advertisers have done an effective job in touting their product. But despite how archaic water may seem, the well-informed athlete who performs moderate exercise and chooses a bottle of water deserves a round of applause—he or she has not been squeezed dry by advertisers.



Thymes & Seasons

Chicken Taco Salad

Ingredients

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| 4 sprays of olive oil cooking spray | ½ cup shredded reduced-fat Mexican cheese |
| 8 medium corn tortillas, cut into 4 wedges each | ½ cup fat-free sour cream |
| ½ tsp table salt | ¼ cup salsa |
| 4 cups romaine lettuce, shredded | ½ tsp ground cumin, or Adobo seasoning |
| 1 pound chicken breast, cooked, skinless, shredded | ½ tsp hot pepper sauce |
| 1 cup diced tomatoes | |



Directions

Preheat oven to 400° F. Coat a large baking sheet with cooking spray. Arrange tortillas on baking sheet; spray tortillas with cooking spray and sprinkle with salt. Bake until golden, about 10 minutes.

Arrange tortillas in bottom and up sides of 4 salad bowls. Place ¼ of lettuce, chicken, tomatoes and cheese in each bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together sour cream, salsa, cumin and pepper sauce. Drizzle about 3 tbsp dressing over each salad.

Source: *WeightWatchers.com*

Exercise Your Logic Abilities

Logic is the art of reasoning—finding an orderly sequence for disparate elements. The following exercises and activities will awaken the inherent logic inside of you.

- Don't use a list when shopping. Instead, invent a system to replace the list. For example, use memory aids such as forming a complete word, or one that can be completed by adding a certain vowel or consonant from the first letters of the words for the things you need to buy. Or you can classify foods into raw and cooked. Use whatever alternative works best for you.
- All games involve logical activities. Card games such as pinochle and bridge, or board games of strategy such as chess or checkers, are good choices. So are crossword puzzles, anagrams, and other word games. Avoid playing the same games all the time. Chess players might switch to Go™ or Othello™, while bridge players might play whist or hearts. Playing the same game all the time leads to routine, which is the opposite of activation.
- Find new games and interests. Explore activities that are completely new to you and find new partners for old and new games and activities.

Low-calorie Mashed Potato Substitute

If you like mashed potatoes but not the calories, take 1 large cauliflower, wash and take off the flowers, and steam (or boil in a pot with as little water as possible if no steamer is available). Use a mixer as with mashing potatoes and add 1-2 tablespoons of real butter. They taste just like real mashed potatoes.

Source: *Euleza Hymas*

BYU-Idaho Wellness Center

Location: Hart 152

Hours: Mon/Wed 1:00-6:00 p.m. • Tue 8:00-11:00am., 3:00-6:00 p.m.

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Self-Image: the Good, the Bad, and it's Curable

Whether it stems from poor body image, weight problems, shyness, embarrassment, or lack of confidence in one's personality, low self-esteem has been found to have many negative effects on personal relationships and social interactions. Low self-esteem has a way of skewing a person's perception of how they are viewed in social settings.

In a study at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, researchers manipulated volunteers' self-image to see what effect a negative self-concept had on their social interactions. The study showed that when the subjects had a negative self-image in mind, they reported feeling more anxious. However, when the same subjects were asked to keep a more positive self-image in mind, they experienced less anxiety and felt more comfortable in their conversations. This study showed that low self-esteem interferes with social interaction.

One of the reasons negative self-concept affects a person's social life in such ways is because people with low self-esteem tend to believe that other people have the same opinion of them. People with low self-esteem imagine that others are constantly viewing them critically. They accept these imagined or real criticisms as proof that they are truly unlikable people. They give up looking for acceptance and begin to expect rejection and criticism.

People with low self-esteem are more sensitive to the scrutiny of others and more sensitive to others' negative opinions than those with a more positive self-concept. Sometimes low self-esteem coupled with such



negative opinions leads to hostility towards other people.

Many people develop low self-esteem during the extremely self-conscious period of adolescence. Unfortunately, low self-esteem isn't something that one just grows out of or is able to put behind after graduating high school. All people seek out others who will confirm their self-image. Therefore, as odd as it may sound, people with low self-esteem are more likely to associate with people who will confirm their already poor opinions of themselves, making it even harder to improve their self-esteem.

But there is hope for those with low self-esteem. As the study mentioned above

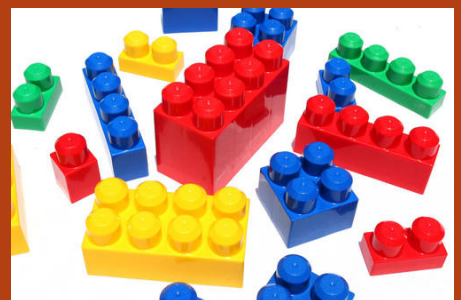
suggests, those with low self-esteem can feel more success in social settings simply by forcing themselves to focus on a more positive self-image. Many psychologists encourage talking about one's self with others as a means of improving self-image.

Another important key would be to seek out people who will foster a more positive self-image and avoid those people that are disapproving and negative. In the end, developing a more positive self-concept is a conscious process of trying to overcome one's fears and insecurities, and it is possible. A person with low self-concept can be confident that improving their self-esteem will lead to healthier and more positive communication.

Exercise Your Structuralization Abilities

Structuralization involves building a logical whole from disparate elements after close observation of the elements. The following exercises will strengthen this ability.

- Take a sentence from a magazine or newspaper. Try to make another grammatical sentence (an anogram) using the same words.
- Buy a jigsaw puzzle and practice fitting the pieces together as quickly as possible. Note the time it takes you to do this. Do it again a week later and note the time it takes to do it again.



Dehydration: Dangerous Ground

It is 90 degrees outside, you have been working out there for a couple of hours now, and you start feeling lightheaded and sick to your stomach. Why? That sick, weak feeling could be dehydration.

Some research estimates that as many as 75% of us are slightly chronically dehydrated. Dehydration is a result of excessive loss of water from the body. Water makes up approximately 65% of your body and is responsible for keeping you cool.

The body's loss of water caused by the loss of compounds called electrolytes (sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium and chloride), which aid in water retention in the body. Dehydration can cause fatigue and other negative effects including hyperthermia, kidney failure, collapse, and even death. Fluid loss of as little as 2% (3 lbs for a 150lb person) can lead to a decrease in performance. At 6%, a visit to the hospital for an IV might be necessary.

Some early signs of dehydration include fatigue, loss of appetite, flushed skin, heat intolerance, lightheadedness, and dark urine with a strong odor.

The best way to treat or prevent dehydration is to hydrate yourself. The amount of liquid a person ingests depends on the type of activity, its intensity and duration, and the ambient temperature and humidity. Always carry a water bottle with you to drink from periodically. When you exercise, weigh yourself before and after; you should weigh the same both times. Lastly, make sure to drink the recommended eight glasses of water a day.

It is important to stay hydrated whether you're exercising or not. Even extended periods outside in direct sunlight can cause your body to dehydrate faster than normal. So make sure that you keep yourself well-hydrated every day, especially when you workout or play vigorously.



Exercise Your Verbal Abilities

Verbal abilities—the precise use of spoken or written words—make demands on short-term and long-term memory. To help improve your verbal abilities including diction, enunciation, and vocabulary, try some of these ideas.

- Listen to the morning news on the radio or TV. During the day, write down the main points of the news that you remember. Do the same in the evening.
- Whenever you meet someone, try to come up with at least one anagram of his or her name. An anagram rearranges the letters of one word or phrase to make another word or phrase. For instance, an anagram for Clint Eastwood could be Old West Action. Or when you see a word, quickly think of others that begin with the same two first letters.
- Each time you come to the end of a chapter in a book you are reading, imagine that you must summarize it as briefly as possible, orally or in writing, to someone who has not read it. Do the same for the whole book when you finish it.



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