



STAY SHARP with Cognitive Engagement

As we grow older, keeping our minds active is important for both our brain and overall health. Along with taking steps to maintain our physical health with everyday activities such as diet and exercises, there are several ways that we can exercise our brains to keep them active.

Choose 5 things you already like to do, and do them often...

Reading:

- Books
- Newspapers
- Magazines

Playing games:

- Card games
- Checkers or other board games
- Crosswords or other puzzles

Arts:

- Art fairs
- Music or talk radio
- Museums
- Theatre shows
- Playing musical instruments

For more examples, see [seniors.lovetoknow.com/Cognitive Activities for the Elderly](https://seniors.lovetoknow.com/Cognitive_Activities_for_the_Elderly)

...AND take time to learn something NEW!

- Complete a new college course
- Take lessons to learn a new language and practice with native speakers
- Learn a new skill (digital photography, quilting, a new musical instrument, ballroom dancing, etc)

Keep these three principles in mind:

Mix it up!

Why pick just one? Take multiple items from these list (or choose your own) and try to do all the ones you find enjoyable. Variety isn't just the spice of life; having a variety of cognitive exercises helps to keep your thinking clear longer.

Do things often

Make sure you're engaging your brain as frequently as possible. You may not be able to visit a museum every day, but reading and puzzles can be done daily. Try to do those more complex activities (museums, playing a musical instrument, etc.) as often as you can.

Challenge yourself

Your brain will thank you if you commit to activities that require active thinking. Don't just read a book, but plan to discuss it with a friend afterward. Instead of playing the same songs on an instrument, learn a new piece of music. Learning a new language or game might be difficult, but stick with it!