

5 ways to strengthen your brain

August 20 2009, By Leslie Garcia

You're lifting those barbells for strong muscles. You're walking around the block or running marathons or doing 1,000 jumping jacks every day for a stronger heart.

Hurray! What're you doing for your mind? Research shows we need to keep our brains stimulated as we age. If not -- well, we're not going to tell you because you probably won't remember anyway.

Instead, we of the problem-solving, nip-potential-problems-in-the-bud brigade, are going to help you along with five ways to keep your [brain](#) stimulated.

1. Don't be so predictable. When we get into a routine (a.k.a. rut), aarp.org tells us, our brains adjust and aren't as stimulated. To offset that, try taking a different route to work.
2. Pretend it's 'opposite day.' Brush your teeth with your left hand if you're right-handed. Southpaws, use your right hand to move your computer mouse.
3. Learn a new word every day. Practice using it without saying, "I think this is the right word" and giggling. Get it e-mailed to you from m-w.com.
4. En Espanol tambien! No, we're not talking about learning what pollo or queso mean on your favorite menu. Branch out; try [studyspanish.com](#) instead.

5. Make time to play. Do a crossword puzzle. Play Sudoku or click on www.prevention.com/braingames for fun ways to stimulate your cerebellum, cerebrum, cellophane, whatever that thingie in your head is called.

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