Memory and Brain Health as You Age: Understanding Changes and Dispelling Myths

Myths We Can Comfortably Dispel

- We only use 10-20% of our brains
- Older individuals can’t learn new things
- Learning a new language is for the young
- You are stuck with the brain you are born with
- Everyone will develop dementia eventually
- Older individuals are doomed to forget things
- Fancy memory supplements help

Mnemonic strategies for maximizing learning and recall
- Rhyming
- Face-name associations
- Chain new information to prior information
- Deliberately attending longer
- Go for a walk and associate items with your path

Behavioral Tips for Protecting Memory

- Add to your cognitive reserve!
- Testing your own recall.. Make lists and quiz yourself
- Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, Word-Finds, Memory Games, Trivia
- Lumosity, Fit Brains, Peak, Elevate, Sporcle, MindSparke
- Music…Its power cannot be understated
- Challenge your taste and sense of smell with cooking

Useful notes on memory and aging from the American Psychological Association: https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/memory-and-aging.pdf

Who We Are

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“No memory is ever alone; it’s at the end of a trail of memories, a dozen trails that each have their own associations”. -Louis L’Amour-
• Across the lifespan, crystalized intelligence increases, with older adults having more knowledge and experience of the world than younger adults
• Fluid intelligence begin to slowly decrease in middle age and later in life
  o For example, in a task where a person has to remember many steps and hold them in mind, younger adults will perform better than older adults
• This could be due to a reduction in cortical thickness (the outside layer of the brain) or a change in connectivity (the inner structure of the brain) over the lifespan
• Staying physically fit can help reduce changes in the cortex, such as by taking walks, or any activity that increases respiration rate

Foods rich in antioxidants can help fight against Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS), which cause damage in the brain
Eating foods like these can help defend your brain:
- Blueberries
- Cherries
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Walnuts
- Omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish)

Sudoku puzzle (from puzzles.ca). Fill in each box with a number 1-9 so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contains exactly one instance of each.