

Lifeline

10 Best Brain Games for Seniors that Improve Memory and Mental Health

Old age is unfair. Not only do our bodies become older and less capable of the things they used to be able to do easily, but our minds can also diminish, too. However, remember that your brain is a muscle, too. And if you don't use it, you lose it.



What are the best memory games for seniors

Playing a memory game is a great and fun way to get into brain training. The best thing about mind and memory games is that you can start them today. Read on to learn ten free brain training games for seniors that will keep your aging brain sharp.

1. Chess

Rulers in 7th century India were onto something when they came up with the game of chess. This board game encourages the use of strategy (“Where can I move my pawn?”) and creative thinking (“Well, there’s an open spot…”).

Chess is one of the best board games that can improve you or your loved one’s brain health. It is fairly accessible, even though many people think you have to be quite intelligent to play it. You can play on your computer. Even better, find a game at your local seniors’ centre or park, where you can get the added bonus of social interaction.



2. Switch It Up

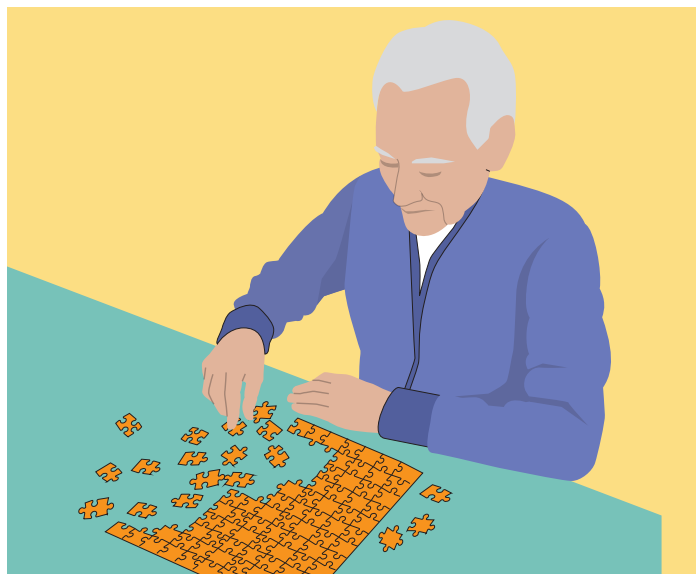
Here’s a completely free brain exercise for seniors: use your non-dominant hand to complete tasks you’d normally do with your dominant hand.

While it might sound like a recipe for disaster, using your non-dominant hand for everyday tasks such as brushing your teeth or eating builds new connections between your brain cells. Also, the more you use your non-dominant hand, the stronger it will get.

3. Do You Remember...

Many people joke about losing their memory as they age. That doesn't have to be the case, though. Here's another free brain exercise for seniors: Test Your Memory.

What's the best way to test your memory? Make a list – it could be anything, like your grocery list, or the next ten books you want to read – and then memorize it. An hour later, see how many items on the list you can recall. The more challenging the list, the greater the brain workout.



4. Jigsaw Puzzles

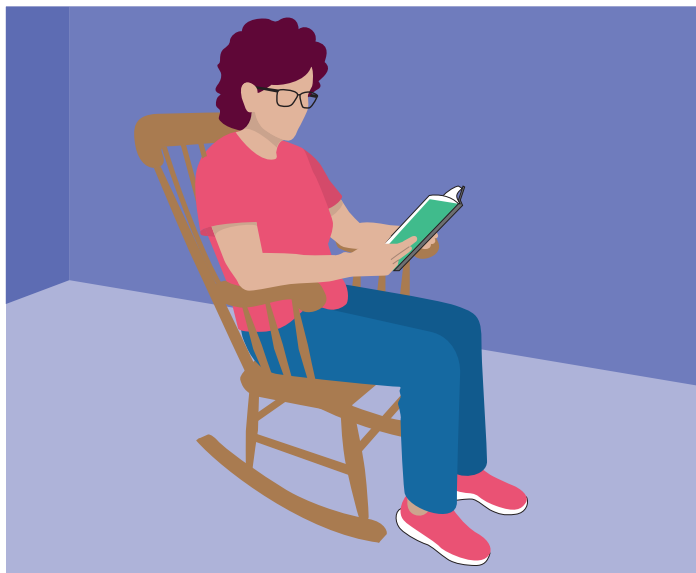
If you're looking for brain exercises for seniors, you might already have a bunch of jigsaw puzzles lying around. And if you don't, you can buy them quite inexpensively at your local dollar store.

Jigsaw puzzles are a great brain workout. They involve strategy ("Let's find all of the edge pieces first") and problem-solving skills ("This piece goes there"). Also, you can find jigsaw puzzles of varying levels of complexity, from a few dozen pieces to several hundred.

5. Make Some Beautiful Music

Have you always been told that you've got a great ear for music? Join a choir or take up a new musical instrument as a brain exercise for seniors.

Learning something that's new as well as complex engages your brain, which is good for it. Here's an added benefit: if you join a choir or take lessons with more than one person, you make new friends.



6. Pick up a Book

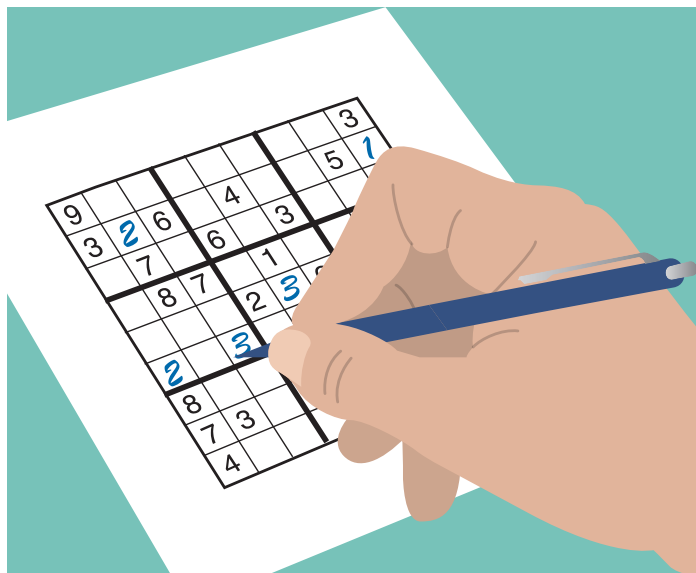
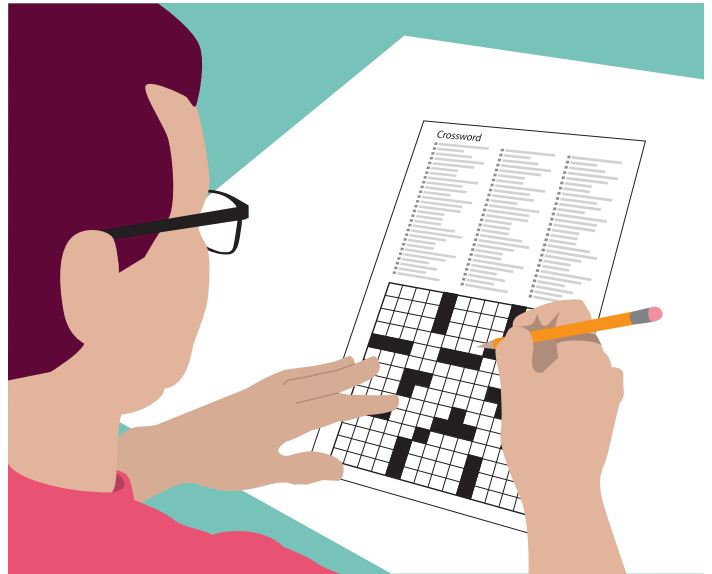
This can be an activity that can be a free brain exercise for seniors, if you go to your local library or borrow books from your friends. Just remember to give them back afterwards.

Reading is an excellent activity for boosting your brainpower. It's a mentally stimulating activity, and studies have shown that when you stimulate your brain, you slow cognitive decline. Research hasn't specified exactly what kinds of books you should read to get the greatest cerebral stimulation, so read whatever type of book you like most, be it romance, sci-fi, or non-fiction.

7. Crossword Puzzles

Crossword puzzles can also be free, if you find them online or if you're already subscribing to a newspaper with a crossword puzzle. The New York Time's version is probably the most famous.

These puzzles are great word games for seniors; they challenge people to think of a word that fits into a certain number of boxes and makes sense in the context of the rest of the puzzle. And doing a crossword puzzle can become a social experience when you ask friends or family members for help.



8. Sudoku

You might be more of a numbers person than a wordsmith. That's okay – Sudoku is just the game for you.

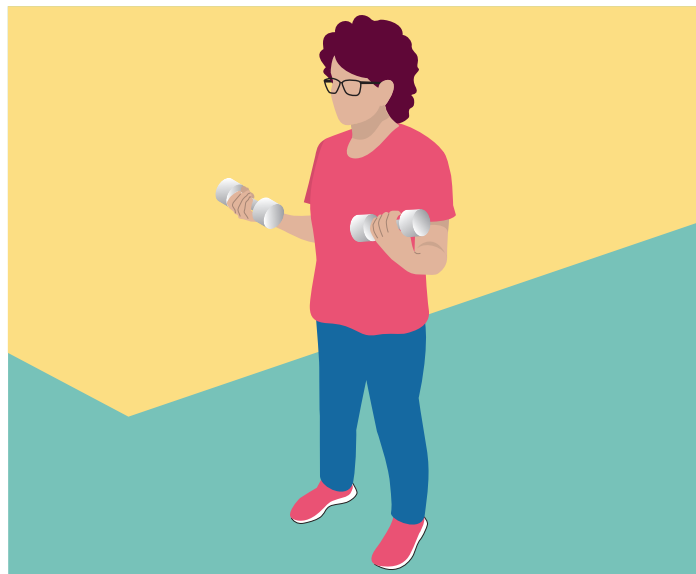
If you're not familiar with Sudoku, it's a number puzzle that originated in Japan. There's a box with numbers and several blank spaces. Judging by the numbers that are already there, you have to fill in the blanks.

As with crosswords, Sudoku can be a free activity. Many newspapers feature a daily Sudoku puzzle. You can also buy Sudoku puzzle books. Sudoku puzzles come in several levels of difficulty, so you can challenge yourself as much or as little as you like.

9. Count Backwards

You don't have to be good at math to play this game for seniors. All you need to do is know how to count, and you have to be able to perform basic subtraction.

Try counting backward from 200, and subtract five from every number ("200, 195, 190..."). Then, try counting backward from 150, subtracting seven each time ("150, 143, 136..."). Next, count backward from 100, but this time, subtract three from each number ("100, 97, 94...").



10. Get Some Exercise

Combine mental and physical exercise by doing some simple workouts. You don't have to get very sweaty, and some of these activities are free (the ones that aren't are low-cost).

Walking protects your brain against dementia, while Tai Chi sharpens your mental focus. Yoga makes you feel centered, and jogging boosts your memory. You can do all of these alone, though you'll enjoy doing these activities either in a class or in a group.

Cognitive decline doesn't have to be part of old age. Doing brain exercises and brain games for seniors (many of which are free or very affordable) staves off the loss of memory and boosts your mental acuity. And the earlier you start, the sooner the benefit.

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