



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Connor & Gallagher OneSource



DECREASE YOUR BRAIN AGE

The brain works through the activation of nerve cells. When a nerve cell is activated, it sends an electrical current that generates chemicals (neurotransmitters). These chemicals are then passed through fibers from one nerve cell to another to pass on the signal.

The nerve cell connections (known as synapses) can be more efficient if your brain is stimulated and activated. Therefore, as you increase brain stimulation and efficiency, the age of your brain is lowered.

There are many easy, fun ways to lower your brain's age. Here are some of them:

- **Play around.** Play cards, chess, board games, do puzzles or play word games to improve the efficiency of your brain. The main rule of thumb: if you do not enjoy the task, you will not continue doing it. So, pick a few games that you enjoy and do them on a regular basis.
 - Devote 15 to 30 minutes a day to games that you enjoy.
 - Do a variety of games that require different kinds of skills. This will allow the various parts of your brain to get a workout.
 - Challenge yourself by doing puzzles or games that are more difficult, especially as your skill level improves.
- **Let out a belly laugh or two.** When you laugh, blood flow to your brain can increase by as

much as 22 percent. This is almost as much as a 15 to 30 minute workout. Laughter also boosts your immune system and causes the body to release endorphins, which decreases stress; fights depression and can improve your love life.

- **Learn new things.** Try a new dish, learn a new language or visit a new place. Also, make reading a staple in your life so you are constantly obtaining and retaining new information.
- **Tell stories.** When you reminisce about the past, you are stimulating the memory bank in your brain. This is also a great way for younger generations to learn about your life, history and your take on how the world once was.
- **Eat a healthy diet and exercise.** Eat many leafy greens, omega-3 fatty acids and increase the antioxidants in your diet (found in blueberries, strawberries and raspberries). These foods attack free radical molecules, which can be harmful to your body.

