

Boost your brain power!

Many different factors affect how well we learn. While we can't control all of these factors, there are many that we can. For example, fuel for our brain comes from calories in the food we eat. In fact, 20% of the calories we eat are used by our brain. Although not all calories help the brain, research suggests that some foods, such as egg yolk, whole grains, nuts, fish, dark leafy green vegetables, beans, strawberries and blueberries might be especially good for concentration and memory.

Drinking enough water is also important. The brain is more than 70% water. If we don't drink enough water, it affects our concentration. We need around six to eight glasses of non-sugary, non-alcoholic fluid each day. Moreover, studies suggest that the brain does not do well with sudden rushes of sugar, so sweet, fizzy drinks do not help the brain either.

Remember also the importance of oxygen, which is carried to the brain by your blood. When you move your body, your blood flow increases and your brain gets more oxygen. Going for a walk, running, or riding a bike really help get oxygen to the brain, as do stretching and breathing deeply.

Besides exercise, rest is important. Getting enough rest boosts our mood and helps us concentrate. What's more, when we are asleep, the brain practices what we did during the day. We actually learn in our sleep. If you have a hard time falling asleep, try listening to gentle music, thinking positive thoughts, or reading something funny to relax. Avoid video games and exciting TV shows in the hour before bedtime.

Stress can also stop the brain from working at its best. Some people fight stress by imagining a beautiful box. When it's time to concentrate on something, they imagine filling that box with all the things that give them stress. Then they imagine putting that box away until they have time to deal with whatever is inside.

Don't forget that your brain gets information from your senses. Therefore, your brain will have an easier time focusing and remembering when vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste are involved. Use your vision to help you learn by imagining what you read – like a movie in your mind. This is called visualizing. Underline or highlight important information in a text with a yellow marker and use different

colours when you take notes. Make charts, mind maps, flashcards, diagrams, or draw pictures. Use your hearing to help you learn by reading out loud or explaining the new information to someone else. Use your sense of taste by chewing gum while you learn.

Yet another way to boost your brainpower is to create an environment where you work well. Many people, for instance, work better in light from a window. Temperature can also make a difference. A room that is too warm might make you feel sleepy. Lots of people find it easier to concentrate in rooms that are tidy. Some people find it helpful to listen to music when they study while others prefer silence. Get rid of any distractions, whatever they may be. For example, turn off your cell phone and let people in your home know that you need to be left alone.

Questions

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 6?
 - A. Your brain works better when your senses are involved in the learning process.
 - B. The brain processes information from your five senses.
 - C. Use your sense of hearing to help you learn by reading out loud or explaining the new information to someone else.
2. Stress _____ .
 - A. makes you feel excited
 - B. boosts our mood and helps us to concentrate
 - C. stops the brain from working at its best
3. According to this article, what should you not do if you have difficulty concentrating?
 - A. eat strawberries or blueberries
 - B. drink six to eight glasses of a fizzy drink
 - C. take a rest

4. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?
- A. Rest is important for boosting our mood and helping us to concentrate.
 - B. You should avoid playing exciting video games or watching exciting TV shows in the hour before going to bed.
 - C. We actually learn in our sleep.
5. An example of a sweet fizzy drink which does not help our brains is _____ .
- A. pure apple juice
 - B. coffee with cream
 - C. orange pop
6. The author suggests you _____ if you can't fall asleep.
- A. eat nuts, fish or beans
 - B. watch TV
 - C. think positive thoughts
7. An example of how the environment affects how the brain works would be _____ .
- A. taking a very hot shower before going to bed
 - B. feeling tired after taking a very long walk
 - C. feeling sleepy because a room is very warm
8. Your brain gets more oxygen _____ .
- A. when you are playing an exciting video game
 - B. when you are sleeping
 - C. when you are riding a bicycle
9. Some people fight stress by imagining a beautiful box and filling it with things that stress them. What do they do to that box?
- A. They put the box away forever.
 - B. They put it aside and take care of the problems inside later.
 - C. They lock the box and imagine throwing away the key.