

News For Older Americans

Getting Sharp: The Guide To An Active Lifestyle

(NAPSA)—Older, active Americans have become increasingly aware of the need to keep their minds active as they age. The key is to find the right balance of physical activity, diet and mental stimulation.

The first two can seem relatively easy compared to the third. Getting your heart pumping regularly contributes to an overall healthy lifestyle. A good diet filled with lots of fruits and veggies has been a good idea ever since mom reminded you to finish your broccoli. Keeping the brain active, however, takes a little more thought.

Younger generations take brain workouts for granted. From kindergarten to college, kids get quizzed and tested all the time. Learn this, memorize that, study this and solve that. Young parents also undergo a constant mental challenge from balancing work, home life and their kids' hectic extracurricular schedules. Somewhere in there, though, people can fall into a routine. It may take some effort to break out of it and make sure your brain is getting put through a good workout regimen.

Crossword puzzles and sudoku always have been good alternatives



Older Americans have discovered it pays to play games—including video games—to exercise the mind.

for people who want their daily fix of mental stimulation. As the population ages, more and more companies are finding fun and creative ways to get people flexing their mental muscles. Nintendo, a company known for its video games, is now incorporating cognitive exercises in its latest offering.

A new experience called “Brain Age”: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!,” made for the portable Nintendo DS system, gives users a real mental workout, without the need to press a lot of complicated buttons common to some

video games. It’s a treadmill for the mind that fits into the lifestyles of the new generation of older adults.

Baby boomers will likely have more active and dynamic retirement years than previous generations, says Dr. Elizabeth Zelinski, dean and executive director of Leonard Davis School of Gerontology at the University of Southern California.

“Americans can do a great deal to maintain and even improve their mental abilities,” Zelinski says. “Aging is about taking on new challenges for our minds. Nintendo’s ‘Brain Age’ is a great way for people to keep challenging themselves.”

“Brain Age” includes activities such as performing simple math problems and quick counting. It sounds simple, but the goal is to complete these tasks as quickly as possible. All of the puzzles challenge users to think on their feet. The software is available at online and local retailers, including Target and Wal-Mart. Additional information can be found at www.BrainAge.com.

Baby boomers might find their kids and grandkids jealous.