

Flex your brain with games

We all know those kinds of people. They're slightly obsessed: They can't start or finish their day without completing their daily puzzle.

You wonder what all the hubbub is about. They're just puzzles. Words, numbers, letters and combinations. But is there more to it? Yes.

This daily stimulation helps maintain flexibility in your brain. And like any exercise, the more you use a part of your body, the less likely it is to atrophy. The old adage "Use it or lose it" is true, particularly as we age.



Your brain ages too

As a person gets older, change occurs from head to toe. In the brain specifically, some changes could include:¹

- Brain shrinkage, including those areas involved with learning and complex mental activities
- Less effective communication between neurons
- Decreased blood flow
- Increased inflammation

However, the brain can still change and adapt, allowing people to master new challenges and tasks as they age.¹

Increase mental stimulation

Mentally stimulating activities create new connections between nerve cells.² They may even help the brain generate new cells. In addition, activities requiring manual dexterity like drawing, painting, needlework and crafting do the same thing.



Game for games?

There are activity books filled with word and number puzzles. Many newspapers and websites offer exclusive puzzles, most of which are available online for free. Here are a few for your consideration:

- **Crosswords** and **word search puzzles** can be found everywhere.
- **Wordle** gives you six chances to guess a five-letter word. There are also variations with three-, four- and six-letter words or more.³
- **Checkers or chess** are games that can be played in person with a friend or even online.
- **Sudoku** requires that you fill a nine-by-nine grid with numbers on each line without repetition.⁴

We invite you to try your hand at this original puzzle.

Teladoc Health word search

- Box breathing
- Brain
- Community
- Exercise
- Green tea
- Meatless Monday
- Microbiome
- Mocktail
- Nurse
- Pickleball
- Primary care
- Self-care
- Spice
- Taco Tuesday
- Tai chi
- Volunteer
- Water

M T S N A M O C K T A I L R U
T E E D S C O M M U N I T Y P
A T A C V O L U N T E E R P I
I A G T N O A E P W R S H L C
C C E O L U C S I T A E N O K
H O S B Y E S P I C E T E C L
I T E T E A S U F M P S E A E
C U L O E S A S O Y I P E R B
L E F O I V R I M C A T E L A
X S C M D A B S R O N R F E L
N D A M C O I E O E N N B B L
U A R A R R X Y E T S D R C O
R Y E C E E X R T A L N A E M
S I I U S K G L C I P R I Y E
E M B O X B R E A T H I N G G
S P R I M A R Y C A R E T M I

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To sign up or learn more, go to Go.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA/New.

¹<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/brain-health/how-aging-brain-affects-thinking>

²<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/12-ways-to-keep-your-brain-young>

³<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/crosswords/best-wordle-tips.html>

⁴<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/02/crosswords/how-to-solve-sudoku.html>

Las comunicaciones del programa Livongo están disponibles en español. Al inscribirse, podrá configurar el idioma que prefiera para las comunicaciones provenientes del medidor y del programa. Para inscribirse en español, llame al 800-945-4355 o visite Hola.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA

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