Can Memory Training Help Alzheimer’s Patients?

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Memory Training Tips for Alzheimer's Patients

Memory loss that disrupts your everyday life is not a regular part of the aging process. It’s a symptom of dementia, a gradual and progressive decline in your memory, thinking and reasoning skills. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. This condition results in the loss of brain cells.

By training the brain's abilities, the difficulties that Alzheimer’s patients sometimes face can be corrected. Studies have shown that rich and varied cognitive stimulation can delay the onset of age-related decline and Alzheimer's disease by a good number of years.

Cognitive training consists of reinforcing brain plasticity which then forms new connections between brain neurons, strengthens neural networks and regenerates new neural pathways. It is also thought that memory training in early Alzheimer’s could delay the progression of the disease.

How Can We Train Our Brains?

Simple things such as having a rich social life, reading, doing crosswords or playing cards, cooking or gardening, already make for natural and effective stimulation situations. It is most important to have variety, enthusiasm and motivation.

You should be aware that cognitive functions cannot be trained like leg muscles. Even if playing bridge stimulates long-term memory for game rules or completing crosswords help with word memory (spelling and definitions) – playing cards or finishing crosswords will not help anyone find their keys or their car!

Therefore, it is necessary to train all aspects of our cognitive functions, especially those that are neglected by the routine of hobbies that we are used to. It should also be added that training is only relevant when the lessons learned are applied to everyday life.

What Games Can Improve Memory for the Elderly?

While brain puzzles might be challenging, they can give your mind a workout. Even if you do not complete the exercises perfectly, trying and putting in the effort is what makes the difference.

Here are some games that target memory and attention:

1. Name two objects for every letter in your first name. Work up to five objects, trying to use different items each time.
2. Try to say the months of the year in alphabetical order.
3. Name six or more things you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter “s”.
4. Look around wherever you are and try to find five red things that will fit in your pockets and five blue

objects that are too big to fit.

There are also a wide variety of games that are available to purchase for the elderly:

1. **Amazing Chase** : a fun hand-held marble game that helps provide and stimulation for individuals at early and later stages of dementia
2. **Call to Mind** : a board game specially designed to stimulate memories and encourage conversations for those living with dementia
3. **Puzzles & Past Times** : designed by Unforgettable and Puzzler, this 140-page book includes puzzles and activities (memory games, nostalgia, crosswords and more) to stimulate mind, memories, and conversations
4. **Jumbo Slide-Slot Bingo Cards** :these extra-large Bingo cards are dementia-friendly, making them perfect for all the family to enjoy together

How Often Should Alzheimer's Patients Practice Memory Training?

It's advised that people with Alzheimer's have two to three training sessions a week, of about 45 minutes each, in order to maintain their interest and alertness. Variety and frequency are the most important aspects of your training.

When to See a Doctor About Memory Difficulties

Memory difficulties can occur at any age and under any circumstances. These difficulties are usually just ordinary consequences of normal aging or a fragile emotional state.

Difficulties with concentration are often due to anxiety, depression or stress. Also, when aging, cultural knowledge and automatic movements, like riding a bike, playing tennis or driving a car, are not forgotten. Many of our actions occur automatically, which explains the fact that we cannot always remember properly whether we have locked the door or not.

You might begin to worry as soon as these difficulties become a real handicap in daily life and occur often. If you cannot manage your schedule or budget anymore, if you always get lost and systematically forget what you have been told, it is time to seek medical advice. Your doctor will be able to decide whether you need to consult with a neurologist or a geriatrician.