

BRAIN AGILITY EXERCISES TO ACTIVATE THE BRAIN FOR LEARNING

As important it is for athletes to be supple, fit and warm up for peak performance, learners have to activate and “switch on” their neurological system in order to be agile and process information with ease, speed and neurological flexibility. The following activities will contribute towards helping learners to be more neuro-agile:

1. Water

The body's electrical system depends on an efficient conductor – water plus either sodium chloride (salt) or potassium chloride salts to conduct electrical messages in the body. Learners should be drinking eight glasses of water per day.

2. Breathing exercises

- Breathe slowly and deeply - 4 x in, 4 x out, 4 x hold.
- Release the tension in your muscles by doing a progressive muscle relaxation exercise.

3. Humanise the environment

Humanise the learning environment by aligning it with natural pastel colours, natural lighting, tranquil images of nature, nature's sounds, natural textures and floral/fruit odours.

4. Use humour

Read humorous stories/comics or tell jokes. This should be done as a specific technique to reduce stress and to allow activation for alpha state. Laughter results in enhanced respiration, an increased number of immune cells, a decrease in cortisol, and an increase in endorphins. Laugh and have as much fun as possible while learning.

5. Relax

- Do a relaxing visualisation exercise;
- Recall a positive experience;
- Practice complete silence for a few minutes;
- Listen to Baroque music

These activities hook up the electrical circuits in the body. It activates sensory and motor cortices in the parietal and frontal lobes on both hemispheres of the cerebrum and activates Alpha rhythms.

6. Music/nature sounds

Music is a mood inducer. String instrument music combined with sounds of nature, like that of a millstream, triggers the areas of the brain responsible for relaxation and Alpha rhythms, which makes the brain more receptive to absorb larger volumes of information.

7. Doodles

Do activities like bilateral drawings of squares, triangles and circles. Use large expressive arm movements in all directions. Write your name while doodling with both hands, mirror imaging each other.

8. Stretching exercises

Do stretching exercises for the neck, shoulders, arms, back and legs. It enhance blood flow, suppleness and relaxation of muscles, concentration and focus.

9. Cross-lateral movements

To increase whole brain performance, do cross-lateral movements at least 50 repetitions before each learning session.

10. Eye tracking exercises

To increase the ability to process visual information through the eyes, do activities like blinking while tracking with eyes all around the edge of an object, eye tracking exercises and visualizing pictures, patterns and colours.

Also do lazy 8's for the eyes. Keep the head still, have one thumb draw the lazy 8 in the air while you follow it slowly with your eyes. Then follow up with the other thumb. Finally, put both hands together and follow as they make the lazy 8. Repeat these activities 5 times with each hand. Be sure to go up the centre of the body and out to each side.