



mNCANDA App

Thanks to your participation in the mNCANDA App, we are excited to report the first peer-reviewed paper was published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research. We reported data from 534 NCANDA participants (aged 17-28 years) using the app for up to 18 months, with an average response rate of 82%. Continue reading here... mhealth.jmir.org/2021/2/e24472/

Brain Games

With many of us spending more time alone, people are finding new ways to fight boredom, including picking up a new hobby like playing an instrument, baking, or learning a new language. Mentally stimulating activities like chess, crosswords, Sudoku, and even playing an instrument or painting can be considered "brain games".

Brain games utilize critical thinking skills that tend to decline with age, such as processing speed, reaction time, decision making, and short-term memory. While participation in them alone won't enhance memory, they can be an effective tool to improve specific brain-based skills and maintain general brain health.

Do you want to start incorporating brain games into your daily routine? Make sure you diversify your interests once you build a solid skillset in one hobby. Maintaining previously established skills is also important, so make sure to engage in multiple types of activities, including physical exercise for overall health.

[//health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/the-thinking-on-brain-games](https://health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/the-thinking-on-brain-games)

Benefits of Spending More Time at Home

Being physically present with loved ones maintains mental health by establishing a regular support system and genuine connection. This process functions through face communication, which may help to reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety that can be exacerbated by social media use. Spending more time with family also strengthens conflict resolution and stress management skills, affording family members opportunities to talk through conflicts. Working from home also presents the opportunity to create a healthier work-life balance with more time to prioritize physical and mental health. With more time spent at home, nurturing and preserving personal connections with family members or roommates are more important than ever in sustaining physical and mental health.



[//highlandspringsclinic.org/](https://highlandspringsclinic.org/)

Brain Game Sudoku

This puzzle can be solved with logic and without guessing. Each box should have a letter from the words B R A I N G A M E. Each row must contain only one of each letter; each column should contain only one of each letter; each of the nine 3x3 boxes should contain only one of each.

	R				
G	I				
	N		R		
R	A	N			
B			N		A
		E			

Breaks for Brain Health

Working or schooling from home has some advantages, however, there are potential negative effects. Common detrimental health impacts include diabetes and feelings of depression notable when sitting for prolonged periods. Similarly, trying to sustain attention for extended time can be counterproductive. It is often recommended that taking breaks from work during the day is beneficial for health and productivity, and there is scientific evidence supporting this claim. The performance of the prefrontal cortex, involved in logical thinking and executive functioning, is enhanced after taking time away from strenuous concentration. Therefore, dispersing leisure time throughout the workday may improve motivation. There is also data that memory consolidation could occur during a rest period other than sleep. The next time you are working for an extended period, take a moment to go on a walk, meditate, doodle, or spend some time outside of your work environment and see if any of these strategies help you focus on the task at hand.

www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/changepower/201704/how-do-work-breaks-help-your-brain-5-surprising-answers

Drugs in the News

Ibogaine, a naturally occurring psychoactive substance noted by anecdotal sources to treat addiction, can have dangerous side effects and should not be used without medical oversight, if at all. Another compound with potentially less detrimental side effects, called tabernanthalog (TBG), was recently developed by scientists at UC Davis. In a binge-drinking model in mice, TBG treatment displayed similar effects to anti-addiction drugs. In addition, TBG caused a rapid reduction in heroin consumption and protection from relapse in opioid seeking rats. Although this is a promising step forward in addiction research, further studies are needed before these findings can be applied to treat human drug addiction.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03404-z>



Sudoku Answer Key

A	R	M	G	N	E
G	I	A	B	A	M
E	N	B	R	A	I
R	A	N	M	I	B
B	G	I	N	E	A
M	A	E	A	R	G