

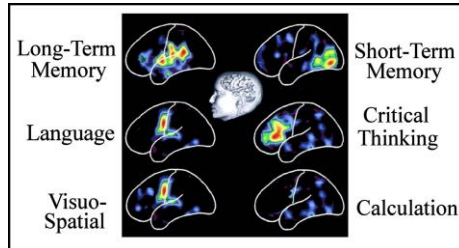
BRAIN FITNESS EDUCATION AND EXERCISE

Neuroplasticity

Source: CNN Transcripts

Neuroplasticity or **brain plasticity** refers to the brain's ability to change throughout life. The brain has the amazing ability to **reorganize itself by forming new connections between brain cells (neurons)**. "This is still a relatively new concept," said **Dr. Sanjay Gupta**, neurosurgeon and CNN chief medical correspondent. "The brain was once thought to be completely immutable" or not capable of change, after childhood.

Brain Fitness...Use It OR Lose It!



DR. GARY SMALL, DIRECTOR, UCLA LONGEVITY CENTER: "We know that genetics only accounts for part of the risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. **That means non-genetic factors, lifestyle, choices we make every day, have a major impact on how our brains age.**"

GUPTA: "That's music to lots of people's ears, I imagine. I think you and I talked last time about puzzles and word games and things like that. And there's some research that's been a little bit conflicting on this. Do they improve your memory, or are they actually helping to delay the progression of Alzheimer's?"

SMALL: "We know that brain games or **any kind of mental stimulation** is associated with a lower rate of developing the disease. So, most experts recommend that people remain mentally engaged and cross train their brain, *train but not strain their brain*. But there's not definitive evidence that doing crossword puzzles will necessarily protect your brain from Alzheimer's disease. *On the other hand, simple memory exercises have been shown to help people with their memory ability. And those benefits can be sustained for many years if people learn these techniques.*"



Let's Exercise with an Optical illusion
see instructions below*

*In this double-meaning optical illusion, you can see the outline of a man's face drawn in white against a black background. When you look more closely, the white line turns into a word which becomes more obvious and easier to read if you tilt your head slightly to the right. See if you can spot what the four-letter word says. [This image is in the public domain]

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