

Are There Left and Right Brain Exercises? How Each Part of the Brain Needs a Different Workout

By: J Wall

For the most part people are familiar with left and right brain thinking, but did you know you can stimulate the growth of each through left and right brain exercises? Understanding the basics of how each hemisphere works is key to giving each a workout.

Some people may question what the point of such exercise would be, but there is good reasons behind it. Since the right brain in general is responsible for visual processing, "big picture" thinking, intuitive processing and processes ideas simultaneously doing right brain exercises would help enhance those functions. Conversely, since the left brain in general is the hemisphere that is analytical, processes step by step, verbally oriented, etc. Left brain exercises would help boost those processes.

So what exactly would such exercise entail? For the right half of the brain, it would involve performing tasks that stimulate visual usage, intuitive thinking, etc. Right brain exercises might be things like painting or drawing that use the right brain functions of visual processing as well as big picture or wholistic processing that goes on in the right hemisphere.

Right brain exercises would also include games that involve strategy or working through various tasks simultaneously. These games require that you take a look at things as a whole and at times think outside of logical deductions to achieve the goal. This would also help build up function in the right hemisphere.

For the left side, you would need left brain exercises that require word usage, logical reasoning or step by step processing. Brain teasers or word puzzles would be a couple of good examples that utilize the left hemisphere and strengthen its function.

Spelling and math activities are also good left brain exercises. These processes are done predominantly in the left hemisphere so the more you use them the more neural connections are built in that part of the brain increasing function. Basically any task or test that involves deductive reasoning, working through a problem in a sequential order or working with distinct facts and figures will enhance this part of the brain and how it works.

Whatever your preference, researchers have noted that the overall brain works more efficiently if we not only work the side that is dominant for us, but spend some time working the less dominant parts. In other words right brain exercises will be beneficial to left brained individuals and left brain exercises will help right brainers. Building up both sides actually serves to facilitate better interactions between both halves which give your brain a more well-rounded ability.

As with physical exercise, the brain is best helped if the exercise is regular and not sporadic. The brain, like muscle, works on the use-it-or-lose-it principle. The more we are inactive with certain parts of our brains the harder it is for us to perform those functions. The more we work them the easier it is for us to use those functions. So whether you need a good dose of right brain exercises or left brain, the point is to get that brain in shape.