

Brain Dos and Brain Don'ts

A Summary of Ways to Optimize Brain Function and Break Bad Brain Habits

Here is a list of brain dos and don'ts to optimize your own brain function and begin to break bad brain habits that hold you back from getting what you want in life.

Brain Dos:

- 1. Wear a helmet in high-risk situations.*
- 2. Drink lots of water (six to eight 8-ounce glasses daily) to stay well hydrated.*
- 3. Eat healthfully, adjusting the proportion of protein and carbohydrate to your brain needs.*
- 4. Take ginkgo biloba as necessary under your doctor's supervision.*
- 5. Think positive, healthy thoughts.*
- 6. Love, feed, and exercise your internal anteater to rid yourself of ANTs (automatic negative thoughts).*
- 7. Every day, take time to focus on the things you are grateful for in your life.*
- 8. Watch the Disney movie Pollyanna.*
- 9. Spend time with positive, uplifting people.*
- 10. Spend time with people you want to be like (you are more likely to become like them).*
- 11. Work on your "people skills" to become more connected and to enhance limbic bonds.*
- 12. Talk to others in loving, helpful ways.*
- 13. Surround yourself with great smells.*
- 14. Build a library of wonderful experiences.*
- 15. Make a difference in the life of someone else.*
- 16. Exercise.*
- 17. Regularly connect with your loved ones.*
- 18. Learn diaphragmatic breathing.*
- 19. Learn and use self-hypnosis and meditation on a daily basis.*
- 20. Remember the "18/40/60 Rule".*
- 21. Effectively confront and deal with situations involving conflict.*
- 22. Develop clear goals for your life (relationships, work, money, and self) and reaffirm them every day.*
- 23. Focus on what you like a lot more than what you don't like.*
- 24. Collect penguins, or at least send them to me.*
- 25. Have meaning, purpose, excitement, and stimulation in your life.*
- 26. Establish eye contact with and smile frequently at others.*
- 27. Consider brainwave biofeedback or audiovisual stimulation to optimize brain function.*
- 28. Notice when you're stuck, distract yourself, and come back to the problem later.*
- 29. Think through answers before automatically saying no.*
- 30. Write out options and solutions when you feel stuck.*
- 31. Seek the counsel of others when you feel stuck (often just talking about feeling stuck will open new options).*

32. *Memorize and recite the Serenity Prayer daily and whenever bothered by repetitive thoughts (God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference).*
33. *Take a break and come back later when you're unsuccessfully tried to convince someone who is stuck.*
34. *Use paradoxical requests in dealing with cingulate people.*
35. *Make naturally oppositional children mind you the first time (through a firm, kind, authoritative stance).*
36. *Learn something new every day.*
37. *Enhance your memory skills.*
38. *Sing and hum whenever you can.*
39. *Make beautiful music a part of your life.*
40. *Make beautiful smells a part of your life.*
41. *Touch others often (appropriately).*
42. *Make love with your partner.*
43. *Move in rhythms.*
44. *Use a skilled psychotherapist when needed.*
45. *Use an EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) therapist to deal with trauma.*
46. *Take head injuries seriously, even minor ones.*
47. *Take medications when needed, under your doctor's supervision.*
48. *Take herbal remedies when needed, under your doctor's supervision.*
49. *Consider underlying brain problems in substance abusers.*
50. *Do full brain evaluations for people who do terrible things.*

Brain Don'ts

1. *Isolate a developing baby.*
2. *Use alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or much caffeine when pregnant.*
3. *Ignore erratic behavior.*
4. *Lie around the house and never exercise.*
5. *Ignore concussions.*
6. *Smoke.*
7. *Drink much caffeine.*
8. *Drink much alcohol.*
9. *Do drugs (NO heroin, inhalants, mushrooms, PCP, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines (unless in prescribed doses for ADD)).*
10. *Eat without forethought about what foods are best for your brain.*
11. *Drive without wearing a seat belt.*
12. *Ride a motorcycle, bicycle, skateboard, in-line skates, snowboard, and so forth without a helmet.*
13. *Hit a soccer ball with your head.*
14. *Bang your head when you're frustrated (protect the head of children who are head bangers).*
15. *Bungee jump.*
16. *Hand out with people who do drugs, fight, or are involved in other dangerous activities.*
17. *Allow your breathing to get out of control.*
18. *Think in black-or-white terms.*
19. *Think in words like always, never, every time, everyone.*
20. *Focus on the negative things in your life.*
21. *Predict the worst.*
22. *Think only with your feelings.*
23. *Try to read other people's minds.*
24. *Blame other people for your problems.*
25. *Label yourself or others with negative terms.*
26. *Beat up yourself or others with guilt (very ineffective).*
27. *Personalize situations that have little to do with you.*
28. *Feed your ANTs.*
29. *Use sex as a weapon with your partner.*
30. *Talk to others in a hateful way.*
31. *Push people away.*
32. *Be around toxic smells.*
33. *Be around toxic people.*
34. *Focus too much on what other people think of you (odds are they aren't thinking about you at all).*
35. *Allow your life to just happen without you directing and planning it.*
36. *Take the "stimulant bait" from other people.*
37. *Be another person's stimulant.*
38. *Allow thoughts to go over and over in your head.*
39. *Automatically say no to others; think first if what they want fits with your goals.*
40. *Automatically say yes to others; think first if what they want fits with your goals.*
41. *Argue with someone who is stuck.*

42. *Isolate yourself when you feel worried, depressed, or panicky.*
43. *Allow naturally oppositional children to be oppositional.*
44. *Listen to toxic music.*
45. *Blame substance abusers as morally defective.*
46. *Refuse to take medications when needed.*
47. *Self-medicate; when you have problems, get help from professionals.*
48. *Deny you have problems.*
49. *Refuse to listen to the people you love who are trying to tell you to get help.*
50. *Withhold love, touch, and companionship from those you love as a way to express anger.*