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How to Upgrade to a  
**SMARTER BRAIN**

# How to Upgrade to a Smarter Brain

by



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# INTRODUCTION

When you want to have a healthy body, you know that you need to make changes to your lifestyle to achieve your goals. You need to work out and you need to eat right. The same is true

when you want to improve your brain. It won't happen overnight, and it won't happen if you don't work toward it.

Let's look at some of the best things you can do to keep your brain in good shape

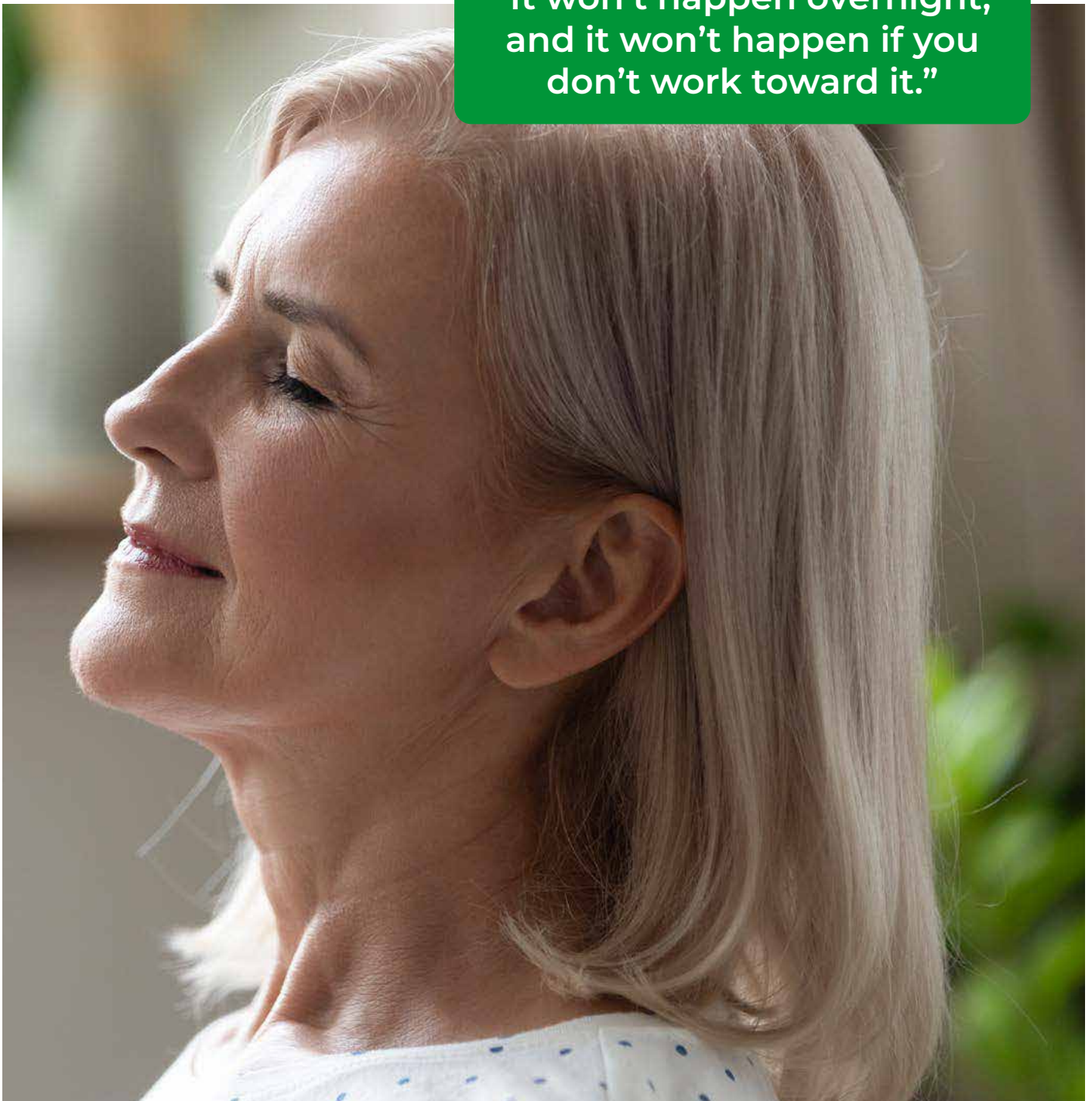




# Tips for a Brain Update

When you want to have a healthy body, you know that you need to make changes to your lifestyle to achieve your goals. You need to work out and you need to eat right. The same is true when you want to improve your brain. It won't happen overnight, and it won't happen if you don't work toward it.

**"It won't happen overnight,  
and it won't happen if you  
don't work toward it."**

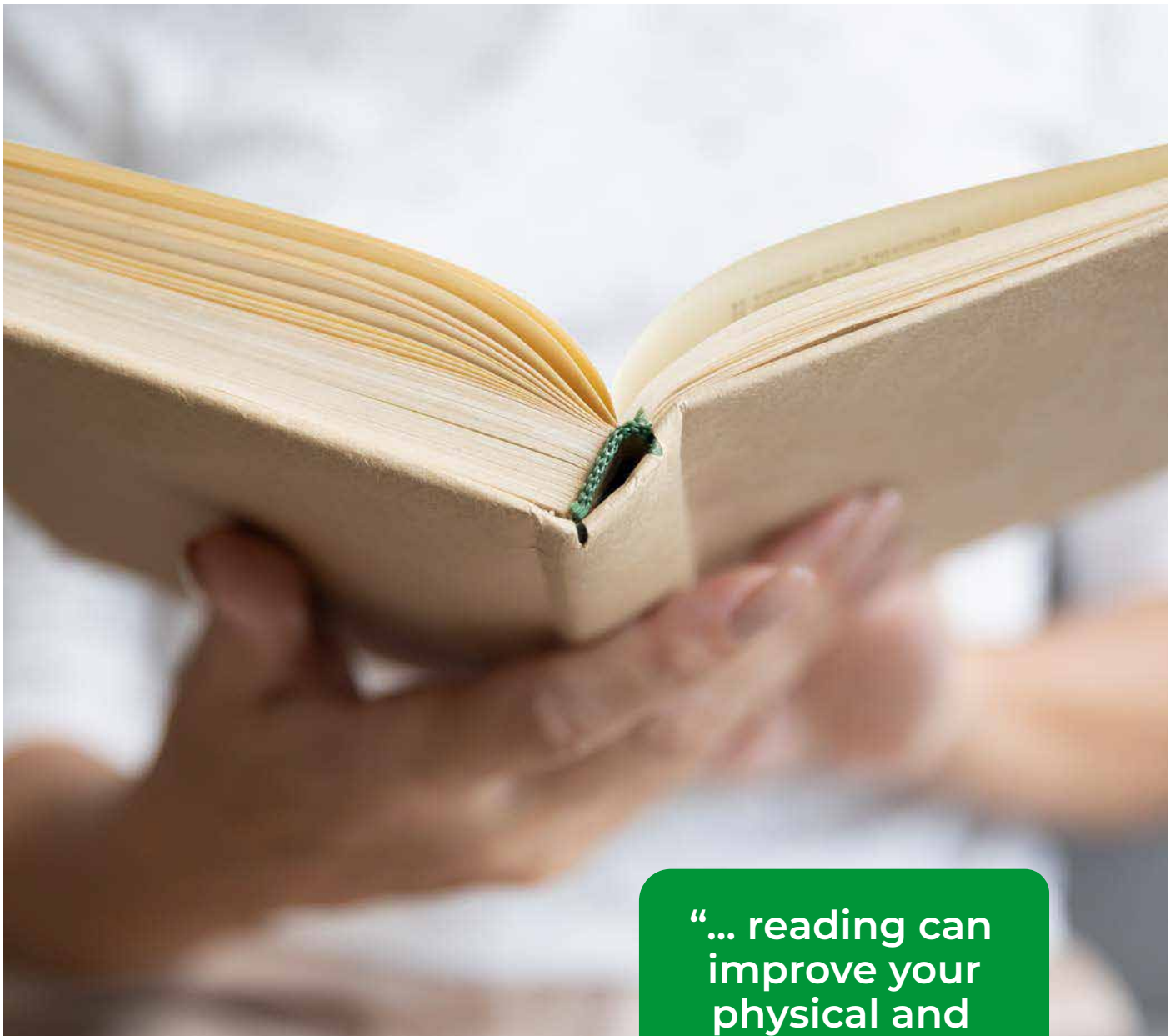


Let's look at some of the best things you can do to keep your brain in good shape and to become smarter and more skilled.

A photograph of an elderly woman with long, flowing white hair, sitting on a light-colored sofa. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and dark blue pants. She is holding an open book with a dark cover and is looking down at it with a focused expression. Her hands are clasped together near her chin. The background is softly blurred, showing a window with dark frames and a green plant. A white rectangular box with the text "READ MORE" is overlaid on the image.

**READ MORE**





**“... reading can  
improve your  
physical and  
mental health.”**

Most people do not read nearly as much as they should. According to research, reading can improve your physical and mental health. Research from UC Berkley has found that the more children read the better their cognitive skills and vocabulary growth. However, the Pew Research Center has found that nearly one-quarter of all adults in the United States have not read a book in the last year<sup>1</sup>. They have not read even part of a book, whether in print, electronically, or audibly.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics American

Time Use Survey found that Americans who were over 15 were spending about 17 minutes a day reading for personal interest, which was down from 21 minutes in 2007<sup>2</sup>.

However, reading can be good for you for many different reasons. Whether you are reading to help further your career or you are reading for pleasure, it can provide a wealth of benefits. Many people read as a stress reliever, for example.

However, when you read, you will find that you can improve your brainpower. You will grow your vocabulary, you will learn new facts and skills, and it will help to keep your brain active even after you've put the book down for the day.

Make it a point to spend some time each day reading something that you enjoy. In the beginning, you might only have 10 to 15 minutes to dedicate to reading. However, you should try to increase this to at least 30 minutes a day. Consider listening to an audiobook when you are exercising, for example. This can help you kill two birds with one stone.

Set a goal for the number of books you want to read per year. You might want to write out a list of books that you want to read and then work your way through them. Invite your friends to read with you, too. It can be easier when you have other people you know who are reading the same books so you can discuss them.

Read a mix of types of books too. Find some fiction that you enjoy, but find other nonfiction topics that interest you, so you can upgrade your brain.

**“Make it a point to spend some time each day reading something that you enjoy.”**



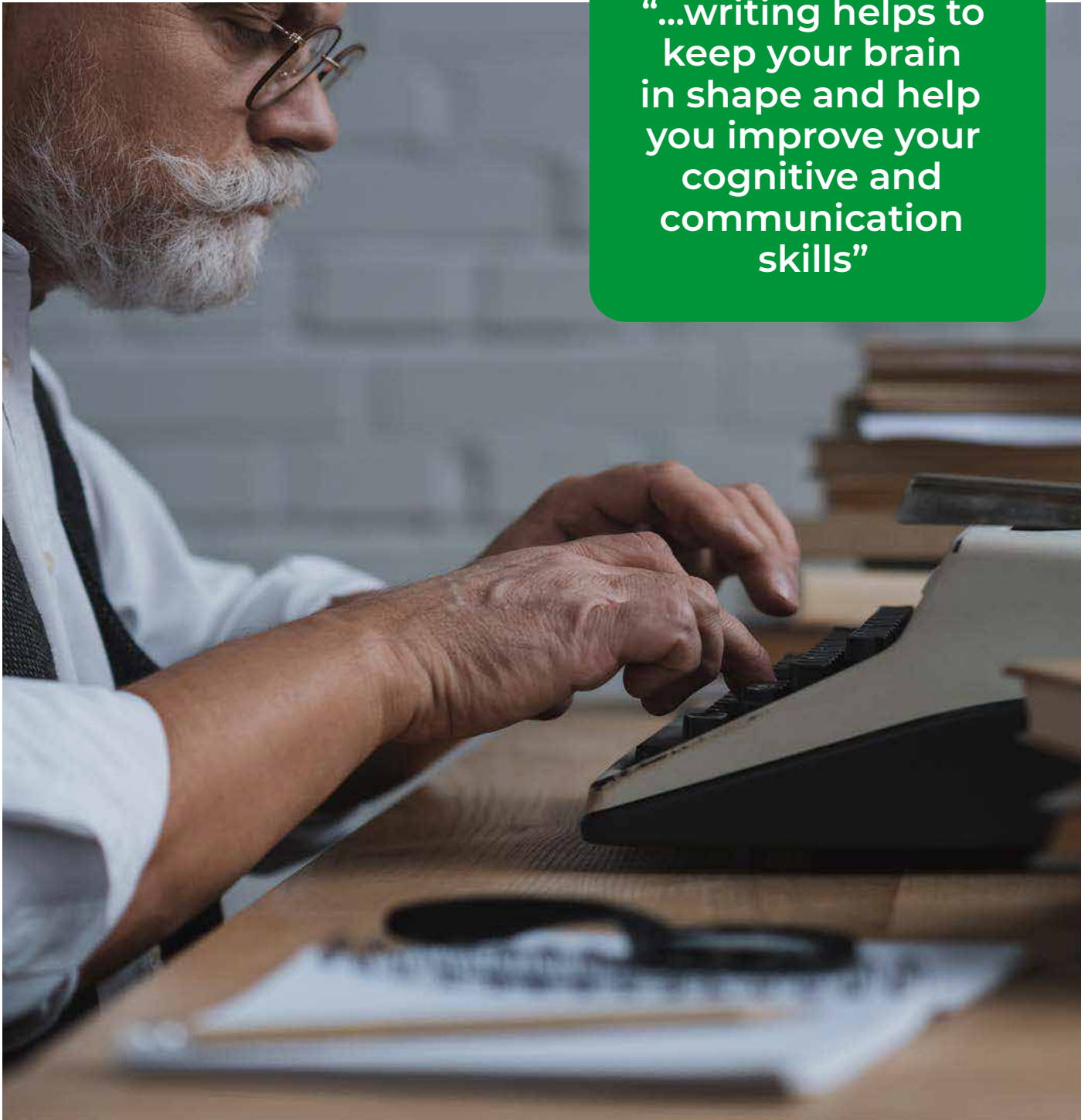




**WRITE  
SOMETHING**

In addition to reading, consider writing something beyond just the grocery list and chore list. Maybe you would like to keep a journal of things that happen throughout the day or the week. Spend a few minutes daily writing down the important events of the day. Maybe you would like to have a dream journal instead. Writing down your dreams upon waking can be fun and interesting, and it can help to improve your cognitive recall as you try to piece together fragments of your dreams.

**“...writing helps to keep your brain in shape and help you improve your cognitive and communication skills”**



Of course, you might want to write something a bit more ambitious. You might want to try your hand at poetry, short stories, or even a book. Whether it's nonfiction or fiction, writing helps to keep your brain in shape and help you improve your cognitive and communication skills. You will be using your imagination and improving your memory.



A close-up, low-angle shot of an elderly man with a full, grey beard and hair. He is looking upwards and to the right with a serene expression. He is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and is playing a light-colored acoustic guitar. His left hand is positioned on the fretboard, and his right hand is near the sound hole. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

# **PRACTICE A NEW SKILL**



What skills have you always wanted to learn, but never found that time to learn? Learning something new is a fantastic way to upgrade your brain, and you'll find many skills you can learn right from the comfort of your home thanks to the Internet and books.

Make a list of the skills that you always thought you might want to learn. Maybe you would like to learn how to crochet, learn how to play guitar, or paint miniatures. There's no limit to the types of skills that you can start learning.

Take some time to make a list of the new skills that you would like to have. A sample list might include:

- **Cooking and baking**
- **Tying flies for fishing**
- **Woodworking**
- **A new language**
- **Painting**
- **Playing an instrument**
- **Magic tricks**

**“There's no limit to the types of skills that you can start learning.”**



These are just a few potential examples. Everyone will have their own list of things they want to learn. Embrace your list.

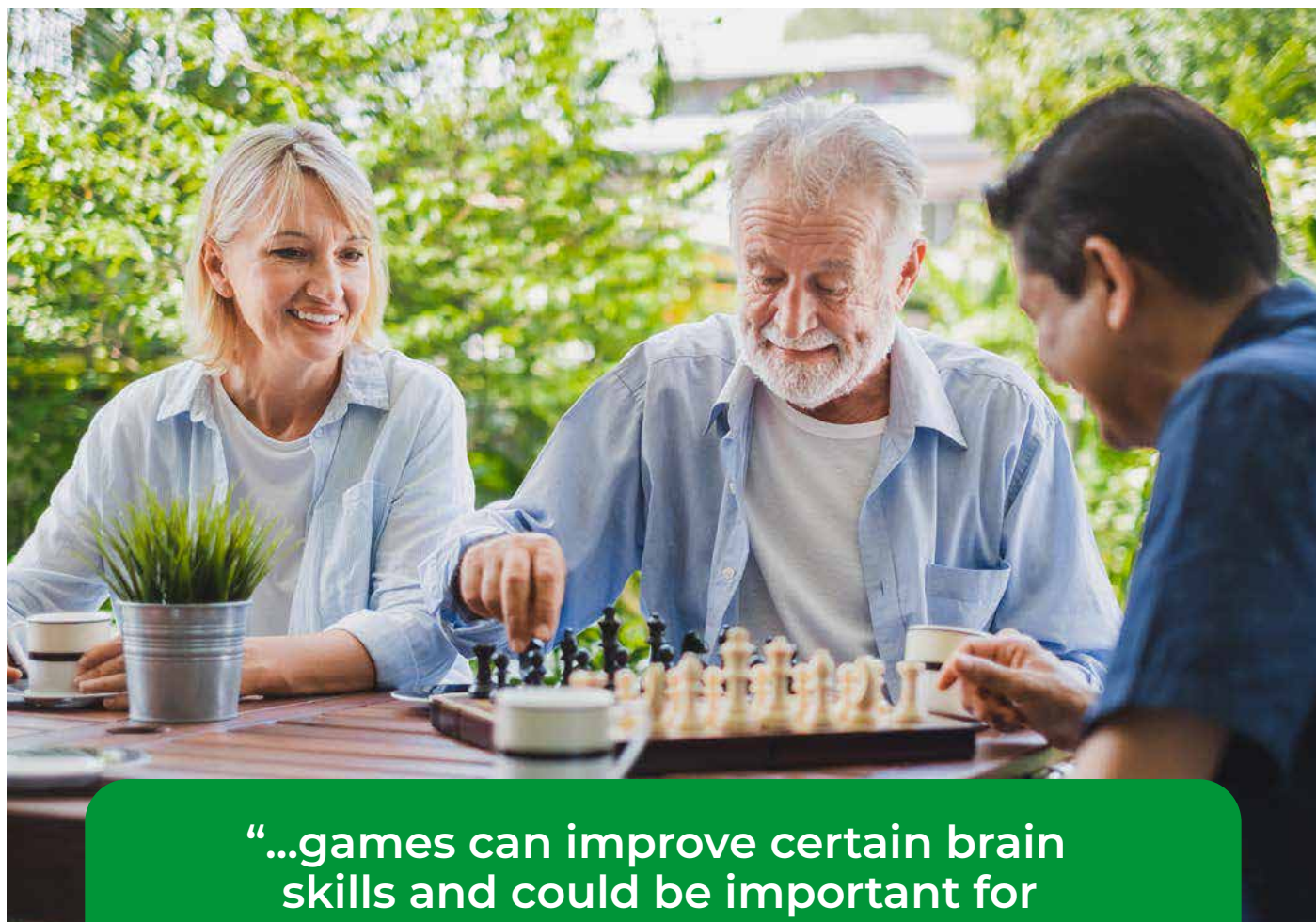
When you learn something new, it forces your brain to adapt and learn. Research from the University of Pittsburgh has

shown that new neural activity patterns emerge during long-term learning<sup>3</sup>. Taking the time to learn and master a new skill requires the brain to change and develop new behaviors.



# **PLAY SOME BRAIN GAMES**





**“...games can improve certain brain skills and could be important for maintaining overall brain health.”<sup>4</sup>**

Many people play games as a means to help them have fun and stay busy. Whether it's a crossword puzzle, a card game, tabletop roleplaying game, or even brain teasers on a phone app, they are fun and they could help with brain health, according to research.

Dr. Julie Brody-Magid, the clinical director of the Memory Disorders Assessment Clinic at Harvard-affiliated McLean Hospital says these types of games can improve certain brain skills and could be important for maintaining overall brain health<sup>4</sup>.

You can find countless games to play to help you with your cognitive skills, verbal skills, math skills, and more. The key is finding types of games that you enjoy.

For you, this might mean downloading some apps to your phone that you can play when you have some downtime during the day. Some of the popular options include:

- **Lumosity**
- **Brain Trainer Special**
- **Personal Zen**

Maybe you prefer sitting down with a nice cup of coffee and doing a crossword puzzle on your own or with a loved one. You might enjoy playing a tabletop roleplaying game with some of your friends online or in person. These can help you keep your verbal and social skills in shape and can even help to keep math skills sharp.



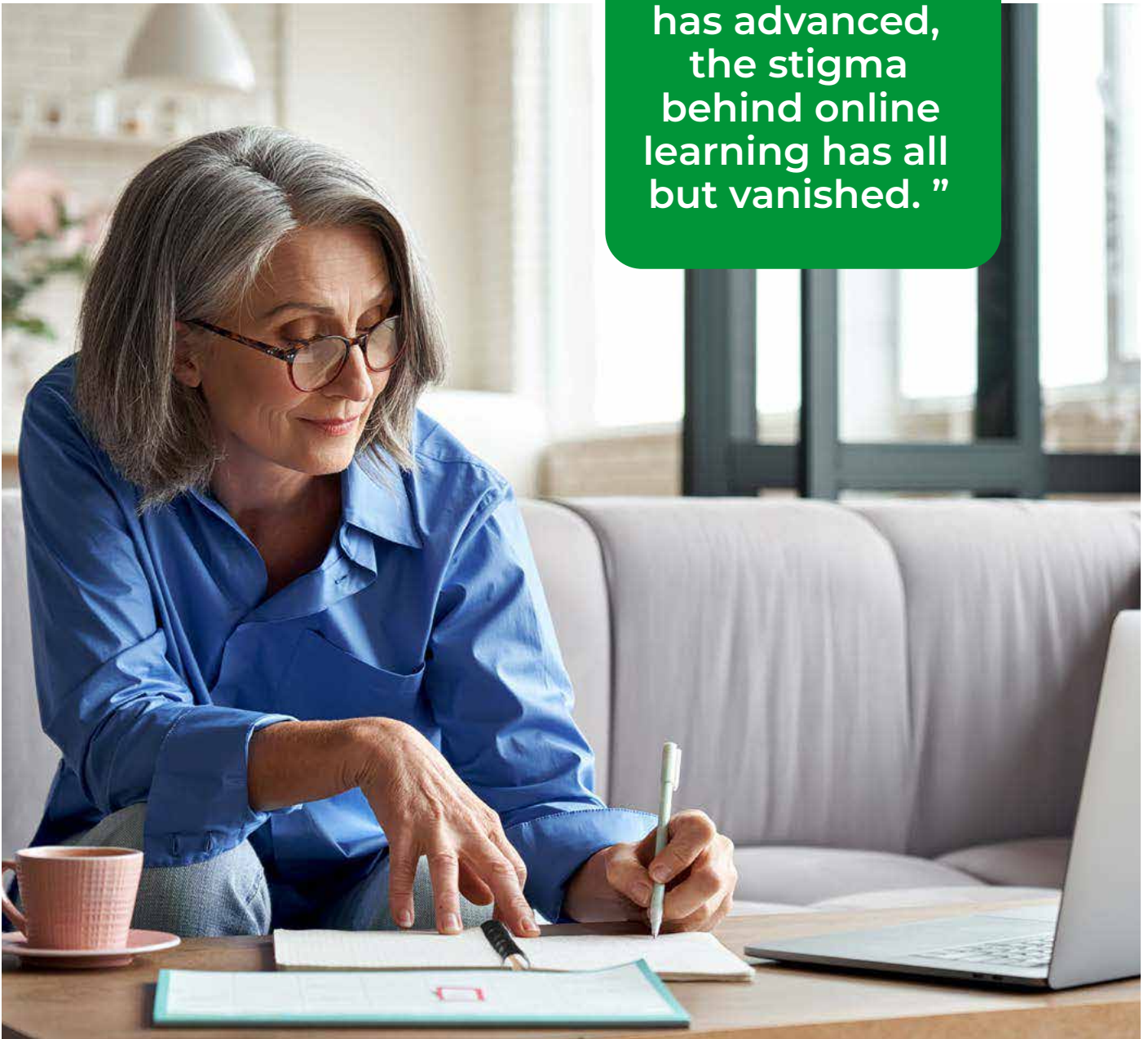
A photograph of two elderly men sitting at a table, looking at a laptop screen. The man on the left is bald with a white beard and is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The man on the right has grey hair and a beard and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. They are both looking intently at the laptop. A white rectangular box with green text is overlaid in the center of the image.

# **TAKE AN ONLINE CLASS**

You should never stop learning. There may be some things you want to learn that are beyond just picking up a new skill. Perhaps you want to take some classes taught by professionals in the field or maybe you want to start earning a new degree or a certificate. In these cases, you will want to look for some online classes.

As technology has advanced, the stigma behind online learning has all but vanished. Today, people realize the benefits that online classes can offer, and they understand that they are just as effective as in-person learning.<sup>5</sup>

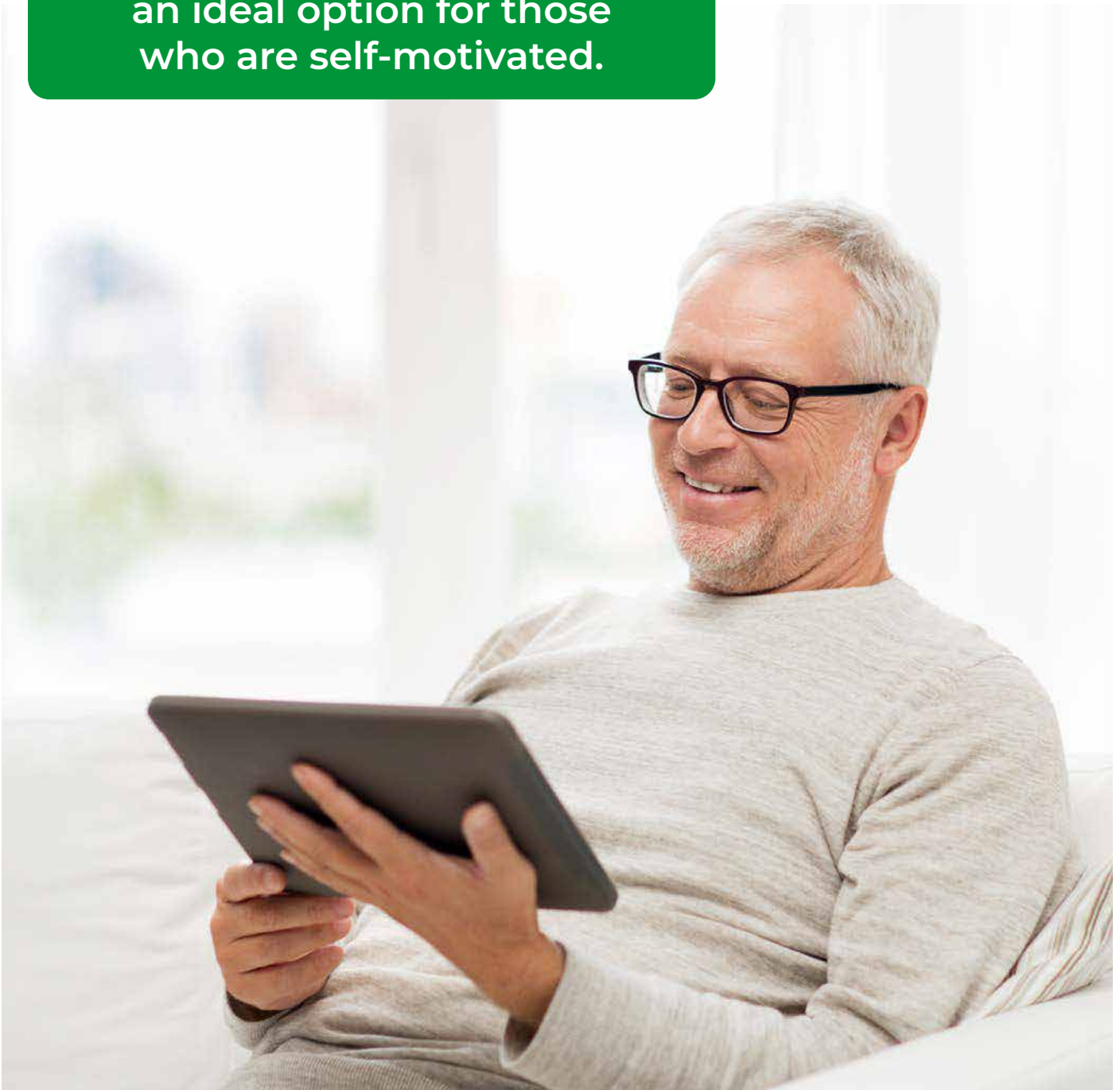
**“As technology has advanced, the stigma behind online learning has all but vanished.”**



There are many similarities between learning in a traditional school and learning online. You will still have a teacher or professor in charge of the class and the learning objectives. They will assign readings and work and will provide lecture materials. Sometimes, the materials will be printed material, and other times it could be audio or video. There will be discussion boards for you and other students to communicate.



**It's flexible, offers better time management, and is an ideal option for those who are self-motivated.**



However, you won't have to leave your home to get an education. This is helpful if you already have other things going on in your life that would make it hard for you to get to and from a brick and mortar classroom. It's flexible, offers better time management, and is an ideal option for those who are self-motivated.

If you've wanted to get a degree or pick up a skill that requires certification, online classes can be a great choice. Even if you're just looking for some new skills, you might like the more regimented structure of an online classroom rather than doing it all on your own.



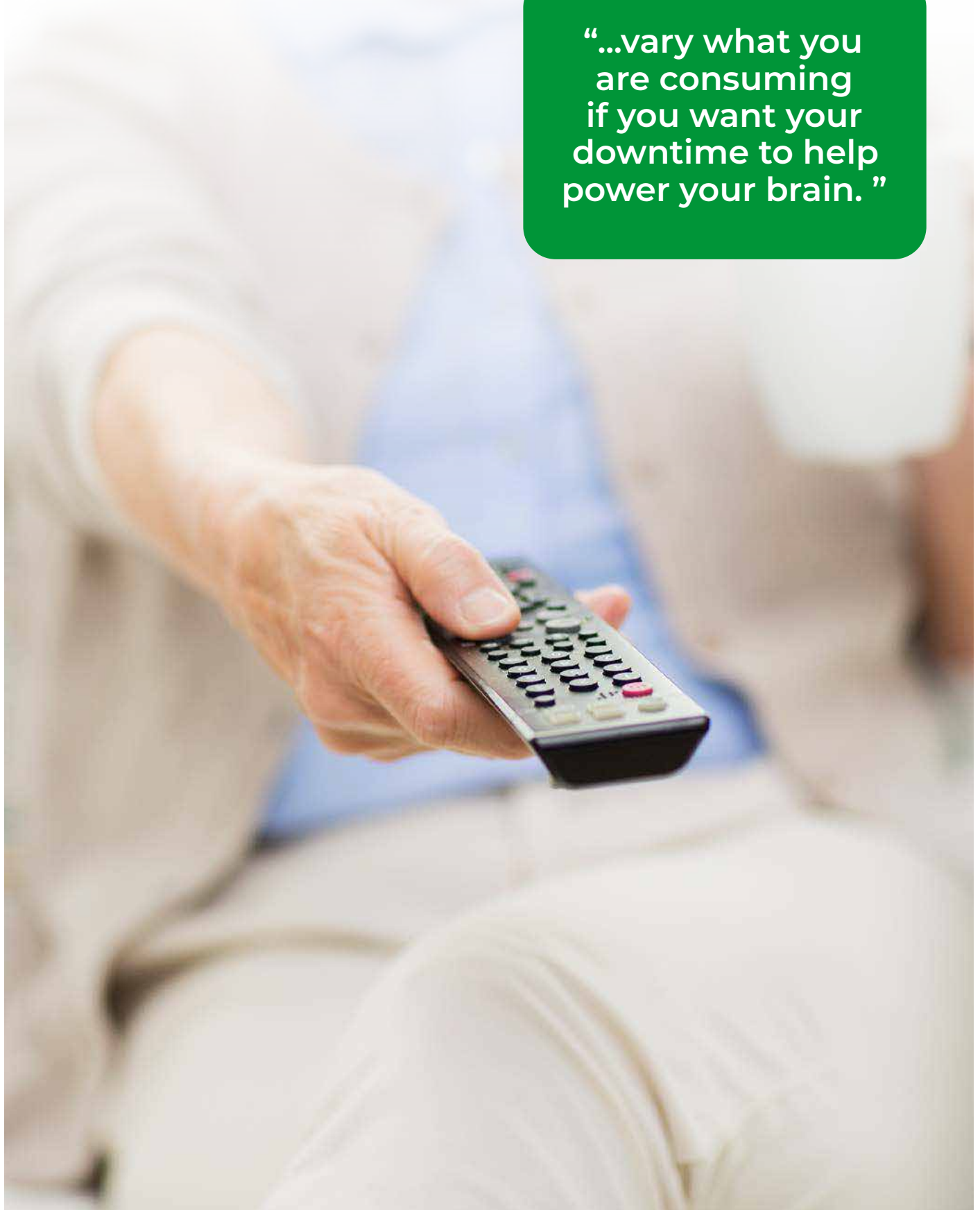


# THINK ABOUT YOUR MEDIA EXPERIENCES

There's nothing wrong with enjoying some mindlessly fun programming on TV. However, you may want to vary what you are consuming if you want your downtime to help power your brain. Consider watching some documentaries

on subjects that interest you, for example. Documentaries will help you learn while you watch and will probably do a lot more for you than another episode of a reality television show.

**“...vary what you are consuming if you want your downtime to help power your brain.”**





A photograph of a man and a woman practicing yoga in a grassy field. The man, on the left, is wearing a blue t-shirt and grey pants, with his hands raised in a prayer position. The woman, on the right, is wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark pants, also with her hands raised. The background is a blurred green field with trees. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "REDUCE YOUR STRESS" in green, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

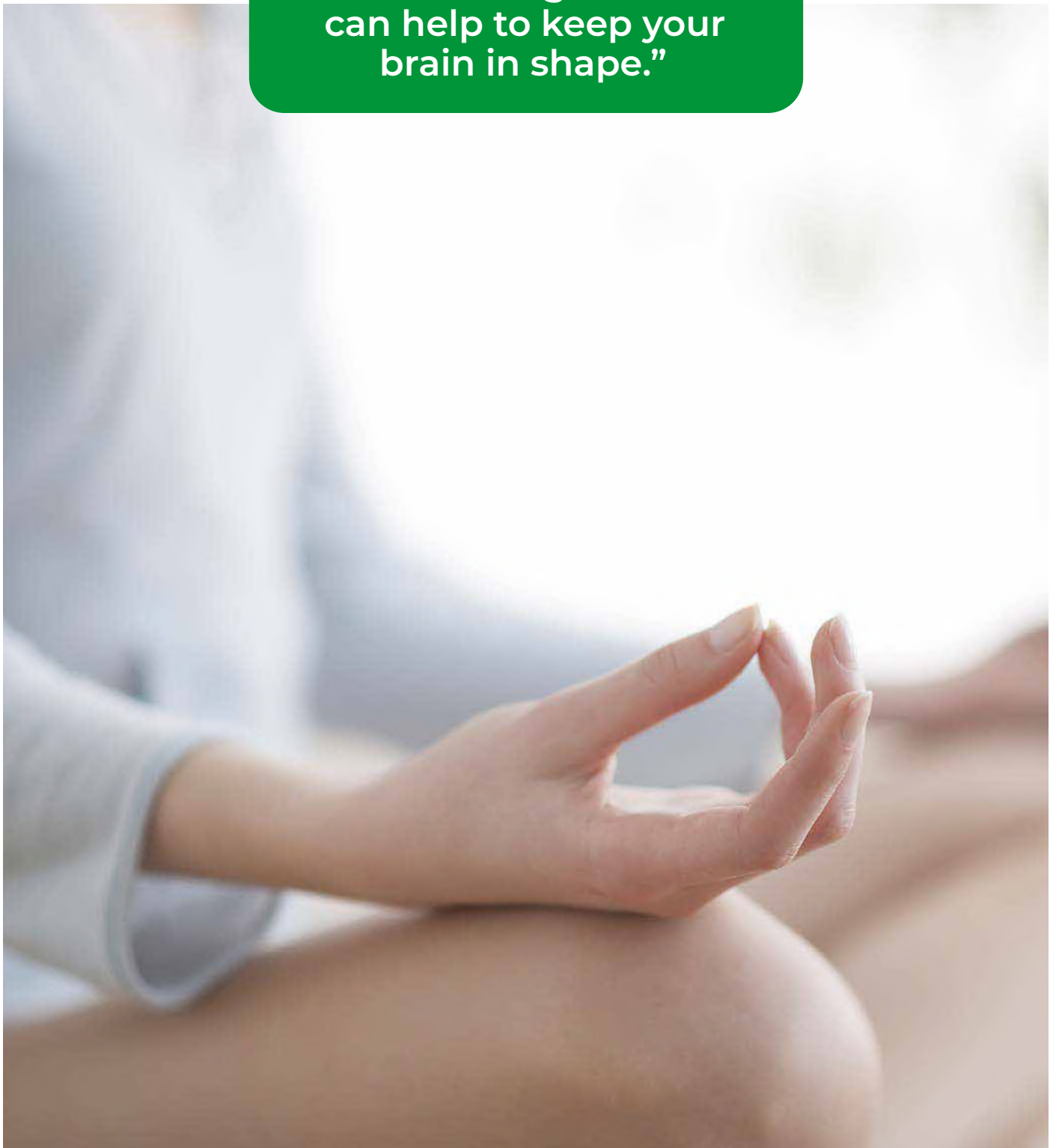
# **REDUCE YOUR STRESS**



You may not realize just how much stress could affect your brain. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley have found that stress and cortisol can cause the hippocampus to shrink. This is a part of the brain's limbic system that helps to regulate not just stress, but also long-term memory<sup>6</sup>. Essentially, being stressed can cause your brain to age prematurely.

By taking the time to find some ways to reduce your stress at home, you can help to reduce this risk. Meditation, exercise, and removing stressors can help to keep your brain in shape.

**“Meditation, exercise,  
and removing stressors  
can help to keep your  
brain in shape.”**



# CONCLUSION

As you can see, there are plenty of different things you can do to help keep your brain sharp and upgrade your cognitive skills. One of the reasons so many people start to

feel that their minds are dulled is because they are not using their brains as they should. It's time that you take out your brain, dust it off, and give it an upgrade.



# CITATIONS

- 1 – Hess, Abigail, “24 Percent of American Adults Haven’t Read a Book in the Past Year – Here’s Why”, CNBC, 29 Jan. 2019
- 2 – Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey, 2019
- 3 – University of Pittsburgh, “How the Brain Changes When Mastering a New Skill: Research Reveals New Neural Activity Patterns that Emerge with Long-Term Learning”, ScienceDaily, 10 June 2019
- 4 – Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School, “The Thinking on Brain Games”
- 5 – Nguyen, Tuan, “The Effectiveness of Online Learning: Beyond No Significant Difference and Future Horizons”, MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 2 June 2015.
- 6 – Bergland, Christopher, “Chronic Stress Can Damage Brain Structure and Connectivity: Chronic Stress and High Levels of Cortisol Create Long-Lasting Brain Changes”, Psychology Today, 12 Feb. 2014

# RESOURCES

- <http://www.productivity501.com/7-ways-to-upgrade-your-brain/8502/>
- [https://jolt.merlot.org/Vol11no2/Nguyen\\_0615.pdf](https://jolt.merlot.org/Vol11no2/Nguyen_0615.pdf)
- <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/benefits-of-online-learning/>
- <https://experiencelife.com/article/upgrade-your-brain/>



# ACTIVATING NATURE'S CODE OF HEALTH

We at **Nature's Blast** are a growing group of skilled experts, innovative, and talented people with one goal – to help people **reclaim the control of their own health**. Each has seen friends and loved ones struck by illness or disease, which makes our vision personal.



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