



## Take the Hello Brain Challenge

We all brush our teeth every day but most of us never spare a thought for our brains. Did you know that activity, attitude and simple lifestyle changes can boost your brain health and may even act as a buffer against decline in brain function?

Hello Brain provides easy-to-understand scientific information about brain health and practical tips on how to keep your brain healthy.

Visit [www.HelloBrain.eu](http://www.HelloBrain.eu) for brain health information that you can trust.

### How does the Hello Brain Challenge work?

Do one thing every day to help your brain to stay healthy.

We call that one thing a **Brain Buff**.

The free Hello Brain app provides daily suggestions and support during your first 100 days. But dont worry, you can still take the challenge even if you dont have a smart phone.

In these pages we will provide you with most of the information that the app includes.

There are five Buff Categories:

- Physical
- Social
- Mental
- Attitude
- Lifestyle



Select a daily Brain Buff from the suggestions provided. Make sure to alternate between categories for balanced brain health.

Track your personal progress using the diary sheet and graph in the Appendix on page 7.

Tell your friends and complete the challenge together.

Like our Facebook page and share your Hello Brain Challenge experience with others.



### Anything else I need to know?

- Consider the suggestions offered on these pages as a guide.
- Feel free to choose your own activities.
- Do things outside your comfort zone; stretch yourself a little.
- Learning is like a powerful brain changing drug.
- Learning generates new brain cells.

## Get physically active

Regular physical activity stimulates your brain and benefits every aspect of your health.



---

Read more: <http://hellobrain.eu/en/brainhealth/project?id=get-physically-active>

---

### PHYSICAL BUFFS

You can decide on your own activity or you can choose from one of the suggestions below. Don't forget to update your diary once you have completed your daily Brain Buff.

1	<b>Get your body moving for at least 10 minutes today - dance, cycle, walk, run, garden - you choose</b>	Exercise may improve day-to-day memory
2	<b>Spend 10 minutes improving your balance today</b>	Staying active can help you to remain independent as you age
3	<b>Move to music - put on your favourite song and dance around your kitchen, bedroom, or office</b>	Exercise helps to grow connections in the brain
4	<b>Do 1, 2 or 3 sets (8-12 repetitions) of a muscle strengthening activity today</b>	Regular physical activity is associated with reduced levels of depression
5	<b>Go for a walk at lunch-time</b>	Walking for 45 minutes 3 times a week is associated with increased activity in brain cells associated with attention
6	<b>Walk to work today or get off one stop early and walk some of the way</b>	Exercise improves mental health
7	<b>Consider new ways to exercise. Google classes in your area e.g. dancing or hill-walking</b>	Exercise may increase your levels of social interaction which is also good for your brain
8	<b>Play active games with your children, grandchildren or nieces/nephews today</b>	Did you know that swimming every day improved memory in middle-aged mice?
9	<b>Skip a TV show in favour of some physical activity</b>	Exercise is good for brain health as it decreases stress and anxiety which are not good for the brain
10	<b>Take the stairs instead of the lift today</b>	Regular physical activity is associated with better cognitive function in older adults

## Stay socially engaged

Keeping socially active can play an important role in keeping your brain sharp.



**Read more:** <http://helloworldbrain.eu/en/brainhealth/project?id=stay-socially-engaged>

### SOCIAL BUFFS

You can decide on your own activity or you can choose from one of the suggestions below. Don't forget to update your diary once you have completed your daily Brain Buff.

1	<b>Call a friend or relative for a chat</b>	Just 10 minutes of social interaction can increase your brain performance
2	<b>Share a mealtime with someone today</b>	Simple social interaction may deliver greater benefits for your brain than solving crossword puzzles
3	<b>Share something from the Hello Brian website with a friend</b>	Social interaction helps to maintain brain health
4	<b>Put yourself in a place with people and start a conversation</b>	Experiencing new situations and people is a critical element for neuroplasticity
5	<b>Chat with someone at least 20 years older or 20 years younger than you today</b>	Research shows that when generations interact everyone benefits
6	<b>Nurture a new friendship</b>	People who are socially active are less likely to develop cognitive impairment
7	<b>Initiate a get-together with family, friends or colleagues</b>	Combine social activity with physical activity and mental challenge for added benefit
8	<b>Offer to help a friend or relative with a chore</b>	Getting involved in social activities is not only rewarding but may lower your risk of developing dementia
9	<b>Engage with the Hello Brain Facebook community</b>	People who are socially active are less likely to develop cognitive impairment
10	<b>Identify local volunteering opportunities</b>	Consider volunteering in your community on a regular basis

## Challenge your brain

Learning generates new brain cells, and mental stimulation keeps you mentally young.



Read more: <http://hellobrain.eu/en/brainhealth/project?id=challenge-your-brain>

### MENTAL BUFFS

You can decide on your own activity or you can choose from one of the suggestions below. Don't forget to update your diary once you have completed your daily Brain Buff.

1	<b>Do something creative today: make an artistic picture with pen, pencil or phone</b>	Mastering a challenge can make us feel less depressed and also helps the front part of our brain function better
2	<b>Learn a new fact today and pass it on to someone, together with a reason why they should know it</b>	Life-long learning and education are good for brain health and lower the risk of developing dementia
3	<b>Memorise the words of a new song, a poem, or a long quote</b>	Learning enriches brain networks and opens new routes that your brain can use to bypass damage
4	<b>Challenge yourself to improve your computer skills. Learn to do something new on the computer</b>	Increased complex mental activity late in life has been linked to lower dementia risk
5	<b>Already do puzzles regularly? Challenge yourself to move to harder levels</b>	Mastering a challenge is rewarding and can increase the activity of the brain's chemical dopamine
6	<b>Start a book from a genre that you wouldn't normally read (Sci-fi, gardening, thriller, biography)</b>	Challenge, novelty and learning are vital for brain health
7	<b>Try a strategy game like chess. Play with a friend or download an app</b>	Mental activity may add to cognitive reserve and may help maintain function longer if dementia strikes
8	<b>Become a tourist in your own city. Visit a museum, art gallery, historical building or exhibition</b>	Challenge, novelty and learning are vital for brain health
9	<b>Memorise the stops on your bus or train trip to work and try to recall them on the trip home</b>	Mental activity may add to cognitive reserve and may help maintain function longer if dementia strikes
10	<b>Challenge yourself to master something new. Research night classes or online courses</b>	Increased complex mental activity late in life has been linked to lower dementia risk

## Manage stress, think young, think positive

Learning to manage the stress that you experience can have a positive effect on your brain health



**Read more:** <http://hellobrain.eu/en/brainhealth/project?id=change-your-attitude-manage-stress-think-young-think-positive>

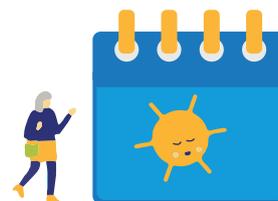
### ATTITUDE BUFFS

You can decide on your own activity or you can choose from one of the suggestions below. Don't forget to update your diary once you have completed your daily Brain Buff.

1	<b>Pay attention to the present – focus on what is taking place in the here and now</b>	Paying attention to the present improves memory and reduces stress
2	<b>Explore an everyday object for 30 seconds today. Feel temperature, texture, pressure and movement</b>	Notice the world through touch. Mindfulness meditation alters regions of the brain associated with memory
3	<b>Smile at least five times today – even, or especially, if you don't feel like it</b>	Smiling sincerely can ease stress
4	<b>Schedule a pleasant event – do something that makes you feel special</b>	Depression is a risk factor for dementia. Pleasant activities improve the quality of your life
5	<b>Be realistic about what others (family, friends, colleagues) can achieve today</b>	People who are relaxed and outgoing have a lower risk of developing dementia
6	<b>Go easy on yourself today – accept 'good enough' rather than 'perfect'</b>	Talking about your feelings can put things in perspective
7	<b>Pick one thing that you feel too old to do and do it today</b>	Growing old is as much a state of mind as it is a biological reality
8	<b>Pace yourself today, take regular breaks and use the time for a short walk, a power nap or a chat</b>	People who are relaxed and outgoing have a lower risk of developing dementia
9	<b>Close your eyes for 30 seconds today and count how many different sounds you can hear</b>	Being present-minded allows you to stay away from negative thoughts that can cause stress or depression
10	<b>Consciously question your own attitudes to middle and old age today</b>	You can improve your mental function by revising your negative beliefs about growing old

## Adapt your lifestyle to protect your brain

There are life choices that you can make to positively influence your brain health.



**Read more:** <http://helloworldbrain.eu/en/brainhealth/project?id=adapt-your-lifestyle-to-protect-your-brain>

### LIFESTYLE BUFFS

You can decide on your own activity or you can choose from one of the suggestions below. Don't forget to update your diary once you have completed your daily Brain Buff.

1	<b>Have a day free from processed foods today</b>	Obesity and lack of physical exercise are linked to an increased risk of developing dementia
2	<b>If you are a smoker, reduce your cigarette intake by 10% today</b>	If you stop smoking you can lower your risk of developing dementia
3	<b>If you are overweight have a snack-free day today</b>	Tackling increased body weight through diet and exercise is likely to improve your brain health
4	<b>Make your bedroom a technology-free zone today. No phone, laptop, or TV in bed</b>	Sound sleep may boost memory recall by allowing your brain to process information from the day
5	<b>Have a sugar-free day today. Read the labels</b>	Type 2 diabetes, together with poor sugar control increases your risk of getting dementia
6	<b>Decide on a reasonable time to go to bed and stick to it today</b>	Your brain builds memories while you sleep
7	<b>Substitute your regular snack with a fruit snack today</b>	The brain benefits from a diet low in saturated fats and high in brightly coloured fruits and green veg
8	<b>Prepare at least one healthy meal from fresh ingredients today</b>	The brain benefits from a diet low in saturated fats and high in brightly coloured fruits and green veg
9	<b>Have a vegetarian day today</b>	The brain benefits from a diet low in saturated fats and high in brightly coloured fruits and green veg
10	<b>Have an alcohol-free day today</b>	Light or moderate consumption of alcohol may be protective but heavy drinking is harmful for brain health

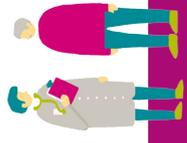
## Appendix – Diary

Enter the date, describe the activity and tick which of the five buff categories the activity fitted into, making sure to spread your activities evenly across all 5 categories. By the end of this mini-challenge you should have completed 10 activities in each category.



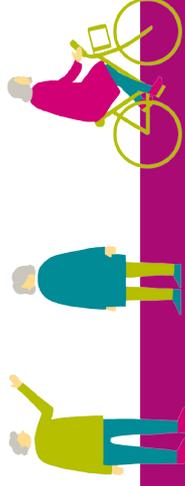
Day	Date	Activity Description	Physical	Social	Mental	Attitude	Lifestyle
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							

# Diary



Day	Date	Activity Description	Physical	Social	Mental	Attitude	Lifestyle
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							

# Diary



Day	Date	Activity Description	Physical	Social	Mental	Attitude	Lifestyle
34							
35							
36							
37							
38							
39							
40							
41							
42							
43							
44							
45							
46							
47							
48							
49							
50							