

Brain

HEALTH ACTIVITIES



Episode Guide

Games



Brain Boost



Brain Health 101

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTHY BRAIN AGING AND CLINICAL TRIAL RESEARCH CALL:

SANDERS-BROWN CENTER ON AGING

2199 HARRODSBURG ROAD

LEXINGTON, KY 40504

859-323-5550

MEDICINE.UKY.EDU/CENTERS/SBCOA



Program Description:

Brain Boost

Activities designed for those with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and those with mild Dementia

Brain Health 101

Activities designed for those with mild to moderate Dementia and those who care about them

Table of Contents:

Game Night Crafting: Dice-Themed Party Cups Craft (Brain Health 101).....	4
Game Night Crafting: Tic-Tac-Toe Craft (Brain Boost & Brain Health 101).....	6
Game Night Crafting: Confetti Celebration Popper (Brain Boost).....	8
Benefits of Stretching.....	10
Nachos (Brain Boost).....	15
Oven Roasted Chickpeas (Brain Health 101).....	20

Game Night Crafting: Dice-Themed Party Cups Craft



Brain Health 101



Supplies

Clear 5oz plastic cups

3 sheets of round stickers the same color (can be found with office supplies)

Real Dice to look at or images of dice to look at

Instructions

Take each cup and put a number die on it.

Modifications

If it is easier, you can make polka-dot cups so that no dice pattern has to be followed.

While making you could talk about different dice games you have played. Some options are Dominoes, Yahtzee, Bunco, Farkle, and Craps.

You could count the number of dots on each die. You could add the numbers on the dice and turn that into a game. You could count the numbers on the dice to create the house or apartment number you live in.

Game Night Crafting: Tic Tac Toe Craft



Brain Boost



Brain Health 101



Supplies

2 Paint or Marker colors

Paint brushes

12 rocks, each about the same size

Paper bag or large piece of paper

Marker, pipe cleaners or chalk

Instructions

Pick two paint or marker colors.

Use one color to paint six rocks and the other to paint 6 rocks.
Allow time to dry.

You can make a board in a variety of ways! You can use printer paper, a paper bag, or even get creative and use pipe cleaners for lines! If you are outside, use chalk on a picnic table.

Three in a row wins!

Modifications

Remember, it's the process and not the end result of activities that make them fun! If your loved one doesn't remember the rules of tic-tac-toe, he or she may make up new rules. Play their way!

If painting isn't for you, use other items you may have around the house. You can pull out an old tic-tac-toe board, or use buttons or coins as your pieces. Be cautious of your loved one swallowing small objects. If you have a large board you could even use coasters as your game pieces. Look around your home. There is probably something already there that can be used to play this well-known game!

Game Night Crafting: Confetti Celebration Popper



Supplies

Small pieces of paper

Empty toilet paper roll or paper towel roll, cut in half

Balloon

Scissors

Markers

Instructions

Cut the top off of the balloon

Tape what is left to the cardboard roll.

Decorate the confetti popper using markers.

Using the scissors, cut paper into small pieces to be confetti.

Put the small pieces of paper in the roll ensuring it gets in the balloon.

Time to celebrate! With the paper towel end pointed upward, pull the balloon back to launch the confetti!

Modifications

This activity uses fine motor skills. Work together. It may be easier to tear the paper into small pieces rather than using scissors. You could also use a three-hole punch or one-hole punch to make tiny circles to fill the balloon.

Be creative and allow the person to select what color balloon they may like to use.

Benefits of Stretching



Brain Boost



Brain Health 101



Supplies Needed

Chair (optional)

Timer (optional)

Stool (optional)

Upper Body Strengthening Exercise 1

Shoulder Retraction

Setup:

This exercise can be done while seated or in a standing position.

If standing, begin in a standing upright position with your arms resting at your sides.

If seated, sit up straight with good posture.

Movement:

Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together, then relax them and repeat.

Do for 30 seconds. When this exercise gets easier, you can do two sets for 30 seconds.

Upper body Strengthening Exercise 2**Setup:**

This exercise can be done while seated or in a standing position.

Movement:

Start with your arms down by your side. Your palms should be touching your sides. Thumbs should be pointing toward the ceiling. Raise your arms up at a diagonal, making a V out from you. Raise your arms up overhead, then back down to your sides.

If you have shoulder pain or discomfort, stretch to what feels comfortable.

Do for 30 seconds. When this exercise gets easier, you can do two sets for 30 seconds.

Variation: You could hold light dumbbells or bottles of water while doing this stretch.

Upper body Strengthening Exercise 3

Setup:

This exercise can be done while seated or in a standing position.

Movement:

Reach your hands behind you and clasp your hands together. Push your hands down toward the floor. Lengthen your arms, keeping your elbows straight. To stretch more, you can lift your hands away from your back.

Do 3 sets of 30 seconds. Make sure you are breathing each time you do the stretch, as that will allow your muscles to relax so you will get a better stretch.

Lower body Strengthening Exercise 1

Setup:

This exercise can be done while seated or in a standing position. If standing, to help balance, stand behind a chair or next to a counter so you have something to hold onto.

Movement:

March in place. Lift one knee up and then the other.

You can vary how high you are lifting your knees.

Lower body Strengthening Exercise 2

Sit to Stand

Position the chair so its back is against the wall.

You can use a chair with armrests, or one without armrests. You could also do this exercise at the edge of a bed.

Movement:

Start with your feet on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Lean forward. Bring your head and shoulders forward as you lift your hips up out of the chair. Stand straight up, then sit back down.

Repeat for 1 minute. Progress to two minutes as you get stronger.

Lower Body Stretch

This stretch will stretch out the hip flexor and the quad.

Set-up:

If using the stepstool, place one foot on the step. Tuck your hips under so you are getting a stretch down your leg.

Movement:

If seated, you will scoot to the edge of your seat. Put both feet flat on the floor. Then bring your left knee to the ground and tuck your left foot back beside the chair.

Hold for 30 seconds. Take a break and switch legs.

Do 3 sets of 30 seconds for each leg.

Modifications

If following along with the video is difficult, you may want to do the movements with a buddy. Sometimes we are more motivated when we have someone to exercise with. By doing it together, it may provide helpful visual cues as to how to do the activity. If your loved one does not want to engage in the activity, they may enjoy just watching the video, or listening. Observing is an activity that can also challenge the brain.

You may want to choose a few of the exercises in the video and do them repeatedly rather than doing a lot of different movements. Pause the video at any time to continue the individual exercises.





Brain Boost



To make these nachos, you will first want to make pico de galo and guacamole. Instructions for each are below. Once you finish making these, you can add them to the nachos.

Supplies Needed

2 bowls

Cutting board

Spoon or potato masher

Knife, could be plastic

Spoon to stir

Baking sheet

Parchment paper

Serving plate

Spatula

Pico de Gallo

Ingredients

2 large tomatoes, diced (2-3 Cups)

½ Cup onion, diced

½ Cup bell pepper, diced

¼- ½ Cup Fresh Cilantro ,minced

1 small jalapeno pepper, minced

1-2 Tablespoons lime juice

1 clove garlic, minced

Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Combine tomatoes, peppers, onion, garlic, cilantro, and jalapeno in a bowl.

Season with salt.

Add lime juice to taste.

Set aside to be used when assembling nachos.

Guacamole

Ingredients

2 avocados

¼ Cup Pico de Gallo

Instructions

Halve the avocados.

Remove the pits from the avocados.

Slice or dice the avocados in the skin.

Using a spoon, scoop or mash the avocado into a bowl.

Set aside to be used in assembling the nachos.

Nachos

Ingredients

½ bag Tortilla Chips

2 Cups Chicken, roasted and shredded

1 Cup black beans, canned or cooked from dried

½ Cup shredded cheddar cheese

Pico de Gallo

Guacamole

Sour Cream

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place parchment paper on baking sheet.

Scatter tortilla chips on parchment paper.

Sprinkle chicken on top of chips.

Add black beans.

Add cheddar cheese.

Put in oven and cook for 6 to 7 minutes so cheese is melted.

Remove from oven.

Using a spatula, move nachos from baking sheet to serving plate.

Add Pico de Gallo and guacamole.

Add a bit of sour cream.



Modifications

Game day nachos is a delicious food that can be made in one setting or over a few days. Here are some suggestions for modifying the activity for success.

Begin with a trip to the grocery store, farmer's market, or garden. You can purchase pre-cooked canned chicken or a rotisserie chicken to make it easier, or use leftover chicken.

If using knives is a challenge, assist in other ways. You can help by being a sous chef, helping to get the kitchen space ready. You could assist with setting up a cutting board, bowls, and also help with mixing. You could also skip the step of chopping, and purchase pre-made Pico de Gallo from the grocery store. Many stores sell it in the produce section. If doing that, the process is much easier as it involves very little chopping and more mixing.

If chopping the jalapeno, be careful as it may burn if it touches your eyes or if your hands have touched the pepper and then touched your eyes. You could leave out the jalapeno altogether, especially if you do not like such a spicy dish.

Another way to participate is being a food critic and letting others know how good or bad you think the food tastes, or you may want to observe the work. Even observing is an activity that can be good for the brain!

Making Game Day Nachos will heighten a person's senses! Visually, there is a lot of contrast with the colors of the food. The smells of the ingredients are enticing, too! They definitely will increase brain power.

Oven Roasted Chickpeas



Brain Health 101



Supplies

Baking Sheet

Paper Towels

2 small bowls

3 Large mixing bowls

Measuring spoons

Spoons to stir

Foil

Baking Sheet

Ingredients

Olive Oil

3 cans Chickpeas

Spices for three different types:

Ranch Packet

BBQ
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon brown sugar

Greek
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried dill
½ teaspoon dried parsley
½ teaspoon dried basil
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400F

In a small bowl, mix BBQ seasonings.

In a small bowl, mix Green seasonings.

Open Ranch packet.

Drain and rinse chickpeas and lay out on a baking sheet lined with paper towels

Pat dry.

Divide chickpeas into the 3 large bowls

In first large bowl of chickpeas, add ½ packet ranch spice mix.

In second large bowl of chickpeas, add 2 tablespoons BBQ spice mix

In third large bowl of chickpeas, add 2 tablespoons Greek seasoning.

Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to each bowl and mix well to combine

Spread in 3 even rows across a foil lined baking sheet

Roast for 15 minutes. Shake the chickpeas halfway to prevent sticking. Roast for 15 more minutes.

Remove from oven and enjoy!

Modifications

To modify the activity, you may want to have your loved one assist with parts of the activity, always focusing on what he or she CAN do.

A person with dementia can act as the “sous chef,” assisting in the kitchen. For this activity, this role might include turning on the oven, rinsing the chickpeas, or adding the spices and stirring. It could also include getting out the supplies and ingredients and putting things away.

Asking for opinions may also give your loved one a sense of ownership in the activity. “Would you rather have the Ranch seasoning or the Greek seasoning?” They may respond “It’s all Greek to me!” Be willing to use what they request.

You may find that three spice options are too many and may want to make just one of the blends. Less is more, so there may be less confusion and more understanding and ease.

Your loved one may enjoy being a food critic. Everyone likes to be a food judge! They may just want to observe you cooking in the kitchen, and that is good for the brain, too!