

# Brain

## HEALTH ACTIVITIES



# Episode Guide

## Winter



**Brain Boost**



**Brain Health 101**

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

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## **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

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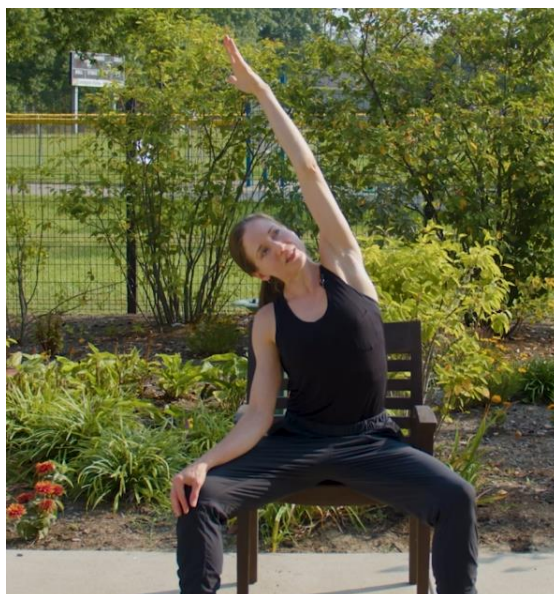
## Chair Assisted Yoga



Brain Boost



Brain Health 101



**Supplies Needed:** Chair, preferably with armrests

### Instructions

While seated, scoot to the edge of your chair so you can sit up tall with your feet comfortably and securely on the floor.

You can have your hands resting on your knees or on the chair.

Sit quietly for few moments. Keep your eyes open or closed (whatever is most comfortable for you).

Notice the parts of your body that are touching the floor and touching the chair. Start to draw your navel in towards your spine.

Lift the chest up. Relax the shoulders back.

Draw your chin in gently toward the chest so the back of the neck lengthens. Feel the crown of the head float up toward the ceiling. Now bring awareness to the breath.

With your next breath in, feel the breath fill the front of the chest.

The next breath feel the front and back of the chest fill with breath.

Your next breath feel the front, back, and sides of the chest fill with breath. Breath fills the chest in all directions.

Start raising and lowering your shoulders. You can do this as you take a breath. As you inhale, pull the shoulders up to the ears. As you exhale, relax the shoulders down along the back.

Inhale, lift the shoulders up. Exhale lower them down.

Turn this into a circle. Start to bring the shoulders forward. Lift them up. Draw them back. And down.

Shoulders forward. Up. Back. And down.

Reverse this. Draw the shoulders back. Up. Forward, And down. Keeping that tall spine. Shoulders back. Up. Forward. And down.

Shake it out.

Find your tall spine again. Chest is lifted.

Next is the Cat and Cow position

Place hands on your knees or chair for more support.

Inhale and lift your chest. Look up. As you exhale, draw the belly in and push your hands into your knees or chair. Round the spine. Continue.

Inhale and lift your chest. Look up. As you exhale draw the belly in and push your hands into your knees or chair. Round the spine. Do this one more time.

Inhale and lift your chest. Look up. As you exhale draw the belly in and push your hands into your knees or chair. Round the spine.

Come to a neutral position again.

Hold on to your left knee. Draw the belly in. Look up and raise your leg. You can hold on behind the thigh if this is easier. Hold. Then put the leg down.

Push hands into the knees or chair. Round the back.

Hug the right knee in or hold on behind the leg. Lift the chest and look up. Hold.

Place the foot down. Push hands into the knees. Round the back.

Come back to a comfortable seated position. Take a deep breath in and exhale.

Take another deep breath.

Hands can be on knees or the chair.

Lift and lower your heels, pressing the balls of your feet into the floor.

Raise heels up. Press them down.

Raise the heels up. Press them down.

If this is too easy, add resistance by pressing hands into knees making your legs work a little harder.

Hold left knee. Raise leg. Circle your ankle in one direction. And then reverse direction.

Put foot down.

Pick up other foot.



Hold right knee. Raise leg. Circle your ankle in one direction. And then reverse direction.

Put foot down.

Now holding on to the seat of your chair or the armrest, extend both legs out and then both legs in. Repeat.

Reach your left leg out as much as you can. Press through the heel. Draw your belly in. Lift your chest up. Take your foot and move it side to side so the entire leg is moving in and out. Bring that foot back in.

Reach your right leg out as much as you can. Press through the heel. Draw your belly in. Lift your chest up. Take your foot and move it side to side so the entire leg is moving in and out. Bring that foot back in.

Take your legs and move them out wider. You may want to move more forward more in your chair. Sit up straight. Draw belly in and lift chest. Take your arms out wide, like a cactus. Lift the chest. Hands and arms are strong.

As you exhale, draw the arms together. Elbows should meet. Palms should meet.

Inhale, and open arms wide.

Exhale and close the arms so that elbows meet. Palms should also meet.

Inhale, arms open.

Exhale and close the arms so that elbows meet. Palms should also meet.

Inhale, arms open.

Exhale and close the arms so that elbows meet. Palms should also meet.

Inhale, arms open.

Shake the arms out and relax.

Put hands on knees. Press left hand on left leg.

Bring your right arm up to the ceiling. Stretch up and over. Draw the belly in to the spine. Reach through the fingertips. Lower your arm.

Press right hand on left leg.

Bring your left arm up to the ceiling. Stretch up and over. Draw the belly in to the spine. Reach through the fingertips. Lower your arm.

Return to center. Bring knees back in close together. Sit up tall.

## **Calming Breath Meditation**

Draw the belly in. Lift the chest. Relax shoulders.

Let all of the air empty out. Breathe in. Notice the space at the top. Breathe out. Space at the bottom. Breathe in. Space out. Space. Breathe in. Space. Out. Space. Continue breathing like this finding space at the top and bottom of the breath. Gradually let your breath turn to a natural rhythm.

## **Modifications**

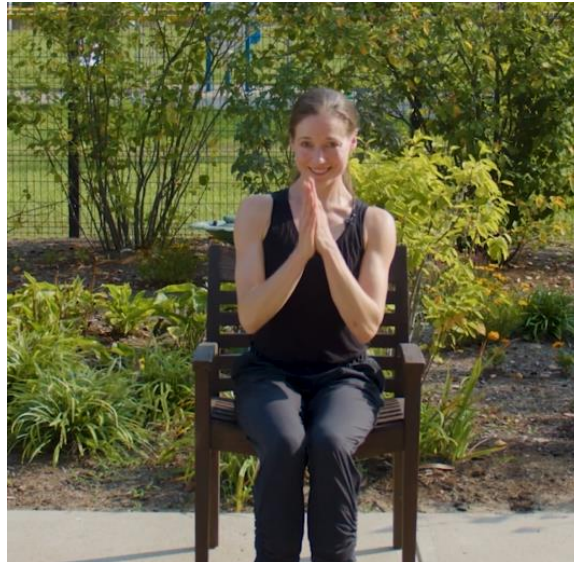
If following along with the chair yoga instructor is difficult, you may want to choose only a few of the stretches in the video to try in



one session. Each time you do it, add another type of stretch until you get used to it. Keep building, adding more as you feel comfortable.

Do chair yoga together. It is always good to have a buddy to do things with, and chair yoga is the same! By doing it together, your loved one may watch how you do it and mimic what you do to the best of their ability.

If chair yoga isn't working in a quiet environment, make it more fun by stretching and singing some old favorites such as "Singing in the Rain," "You are My Sunshine," or "Blue Suede Shoes".



## Baked Apple Tart from Scratch



### Kitchen Tools Needed

Food Processor

Kitchen Knife

Apple peeler

Rolling Pin

Cutting Board

Baking Tray

Parchment Paper

Heat Oven to 375.

## Dough Ingredients

1 ½ Cup all-purpose flour

Pinch of salt

1 ½ sticks (6 ounces) cold unsalted butter, cut in ½ inch pieces

1/3 Cup ice water

## Dough Instructions

In mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, and butter. Use two forks or a pastry blender to mix until coarse. If you have a food processor you can use that instead.

Add water. Mix.

Once combined, shape into a disk or ball shape. Cover with saran wrap and place in refrigerator.

## Filling

1 quart water

4 large apples, peeled and cored and cut into ¼ inch thick pieces

Lemon juice

1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour

2 Tablespoons butter, melted

3 ½ Tablespoons sugar

2 Tablespoons melted and strained apricot preserves



In a bowl, add 1 quart of water. Add a tiny bit of lemon juice. This will help prevent your apples from turning brown. Using a cutting board, peel and core apples. Slice apples into thin slices and put them into the water.

Get dough out of refrigerator. Now is the time to roll the dough to make the crust. Sprinkle a small amount of flour onto a clean counter or large cutting board. Put your dough onto the counter or cutting board. Roll into large circle,  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick.

On a large baking sheet, add a sheet of parchment paper. Transfer dough to the paper.

Mix sugar and flour in small bowl. Sprinkle about half of it onto dough.

Drain apple slices. Then spread the apple slices onto dough in whatever pattern you like. Sprinkle remaining sugar and flour mixture on top.

Fold dough edges over, and using your finger, make a pleat as you fold the dough all the way around.

Brush melted butter onto the dough.

Place in oven.

When crust is golden brown, take out of oven, about 45 minutes to one hour.

Over low heat, add apricot preserves to a small pan on the stove to warm them. Once warm, spread over tops of apples in the tart.



## Modifications

This apple tart recipe has many steps. To modify the activity, you could have the dough made up ahead of time, as well as having the apples cut. Then your loved one would only have to assist with the easier parts. Always focus on what your loved one CAN do.



You may want to take a trip ahead of time to an apple orchard to pick out some apples, or a trip to the grocery store produce section. Have your loved one assist in choosing the best apples!

A person with dementia can act as the “sous chef,” assisting in the kitchen. This role includes washing, scooping, scraping, getting things ready, and cleaning the kitchen. Helping organize is the role of the sous chef!

Your loved one may only want to help place the apples in the rolled out dough. By being the doer of a modified task they are still able to participate. Give them praise! Let them know you just couldn't do it without their help.

Your loved one may participate by being a food critic or taster and letting you know how good or bad they think it tastes, or they may just want to watch you do the baking, and that is okay too! Observing is an activity that can also be good for the brain!

Baking is an opportunity for heightened sensations, which activates the brain. Observing the smells of the apples baking and the taste of the sweet dough. Sometimes these baking delicacies bring back memories to share, and that creates moments of joy.



Brain Health 101

## Baked Apple Tarts



### Ingredients

Refrigerated pie crust that comes in rolls

Apple pie filling

Powdered sugar

Milk

Cinnamon



## Instructions

Preheat oven to 350F (or whatever the pie crust directions say).

Roll out 2 pie crusts on a lightly floured surface.

Using a pizza cutter, cut each crust into 4 even pieces.

Top each piece with 2 tablespoons pie filling.

Fold into triangles and crimp edges with a fork.

Pierce the top of each triangle with a fork in a couple of places to vent.

Bake according to package instructions.

Make glaze by combining 2 cups powdered sugar, 2-4 tablespoons of milk and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon.

Let pies cool for about 10 minutes then drizzle with glaze.



## Crafting a Stuffed Penguin Plush



### Supplies

2 pairs of socks

White felt or paper

Orange felt or paper

Dried goods such as beans or rice

Ribbon or yarn

Funnel

Rubber bands

Elmer's Glue All

Scissors

Marker



## Instructions

Take one of the socks. Fold the top of it down.

Add about 1 cup to 1 ½ cup dried goods (beans or rice) to the bottom of the sock. It is helpful to have a funnel or another person to help.

Then put a rubber band around the sock at the top of where your beans are. Tie it around a few times so it is tight.

Cut about 4-6 inches off the top of the sock. Then add smaller beans or rice. Tie another rubber band around the sock at the top of this layer of beans or rice.

Using white paper or felt, cut out a round shape, almost like the shape of a door to be used as the belly of the penguin. Lay the paper (or felt) on the table and spread glue on top.

While holding the penguin where the bottom rubber band is, take the bottom rubber band off the penguin. Add white paper (or felt) to the penguin. Press it on so that it holds firm.

Then tie rubber band back on penguin. Tie ribbon over the rubber band. This will help to separate the head of the penguin from the body.

Using another sock, cut off the bottom of the sock. Then place the bottom of the sock over the top of the penguin to create a hat.

Using a marker, draw some eyes on the penguin. Use a marker or orange felt or paper to make a nose. If using paper or felt, cut a triangle. Then put glue on one side and attach it to the penguin's face.



## **Modifications**

The no-sew penguin craft involves many steps. Some individuals may be able to do them from start to finish. Some people may need some assistance. It might be helpful or fun to do this with a friend. Remember, even doing a part of the activity is still beneficial.

You may need to use markers with thicker handles if fine motor skills are difficult.

Remember the five senses when doing activities. Take time to feel the different textures of the fabric. Think about adding a scent to the sock or other part of the penguin to make it stimulate your senses more.

You may also want to create crafts with children or teenagers. This can make it more fun as children have a tendency to be delighted by hands-on activities.

# Snowflake Ornament Holiday Craft



Brain Health 101



## Supplies

Coffee Filters

Scissors

Markers

Spray Bottle filled with Water

## Instructions

On a protected flat surface, flatten out coffee filter. Use markers to doodle on the coffee filter. Spray coffee filter with water. Turn coffee filter over. Using your index finger, smooth coffee filter and help water spread over markings. Allow to dry. Once dry, fold in half. Then fold in half again. And fold in half one more time. Use scissors to cut shapes along folds. Unfold and you will have a beautiful snowflake.

## Modifications

This craft activity has several steps. Some individuals may be able to do them from start to finish. Some people may need some assistance this could be a fun activity to do as a family or with a group of friends.



You may need to use markers with thicker handles if fine motor skills are difficult. You can also look for water bottles that are easier to squirt than others.

Take time to choose different colors and see how the colors change when water is added.

Folding can be a challenge for some and you may want to pre-fold the coffee filter before cutting.

When your snowflakes dry, you could hang them or put them in the window. You could make many snowflakes and attach them to string for a winter banner.

As you enjoy making the snowflakes or admiring the finished ones it is a great time to talk more about snow.

You could also sing a few songs about snow-

“Let It Snow”

“Snow, Snow, Snow, Snow” from White Christmas

“Frosty the Snowman”

Or just share stories about times you were “caught in the snow” or some of your favorite things to do in the snow.