

Cognitive Efficacy

DEVELOP YOUR COGNITIVE EFFICACY

Constant learning is essential to improving cognitive efficacy. Just like how you need to exercise your body to maintain physical health, you need to exercise your brain to maintain your cognitive abilities.

Eight Ways to Develop Your Cognitive Efficacy

1 LEARN NEW THINGS AND TRY NEW WAYS OF GETTING THE SAME OLD THINGS DONE

Novelty is good for the brain. Try new activities you're interested in. For example, take a dance class, a cooking course, or join a hiking club.

2 DO BRAIN TRAINING

Keep your mind stimulated with new activities that involve memory, vocabulary and other thinking skills. These activities may include reading, word games, and memory exercises (e.g. crossword puzzles, Sudoku, video games like Tetris). But once you get good at an activity, move on to another new challenging activity. Remember that your brain constantly craves novel stimulation.

3 PRACTICE CREATIVE THINKING

The next time you face a problem or obstacle, brainstorm creative ideas for how to solve it. Also known as "thinking outside the box," creative thinking helps us think about problems in different ways and come up with new innovative solution.

4 MAINTAIN HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

Cognitive efficacy consists of two parts: cognitive abilities (thinking clearly and effectively) and self-efficacy (being confident in your own abilities to navigate through life and its obstacles). Improving your self-esteem and confidence can help with improving self-efficacy.

5

GET PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Not only does exercise benefit your physical health, it also protects your brain by helping to slow cognitive decline as we age. Even light exercise like walking is enough to guard brain health.

6

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Sleep-deprived people perform more poorly on cognitive skills than people who get adequate sleep. Try to get at least 7 – 8 hours of sleep each night.

7

EAT WELL

A healthy diet high in antioxidant polyphenols (powerful compounds that prevent cell damage) found in foods such as olive oil, nuts, and fruits support good cognitive health. Aim to eat nutritious meals with a focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds and tea. Limit your intake of red meat, deep fried foods, salt, sugar, and refined grains.

8

LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS

Stress affects the effectiveness and efficiency of our cognitive skills. Learn some relaxation techniques for when you're feeling tense (e.g. deep breathing, listening to soothing music, visualising a calm scenario).