Increase your IQ with the Right Foods, Herbs, Vitamins, and Exercises for Your Brain

Not too long ago, the general consensus about our IQ was that our intelligence can’t be improved. Though this issue is still debated occasionally, today most of us know that learning a new language and becoming an avid reader have both been proven to increase one’s score on any intelligence aptitude test. The idea that people cannot get smarter is ridiculous, but so are a lot of other conventional medical beliefs still held today.

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If you can take IQ tests over and over again, study them, get help figuring them out, and learn how to do them quickly and well, your score will improve. Some would argue that this is not really increasing intelligence, but it is. Experiences that challenge the brain’s cognitive abilities raise intelligence—real intelligence. IQ tests, while certainly not a great indicator of how well someone will do in life, are a pretty decent indicator of memory, problem solving skills, and other cognitive functions. Obviously, an abundance of these skills is helpful.

A better idea than taking IQ tests over and over again is to do some other brain teasers, learn a language, and learn to constantly exercise your brain. Live life like it’s all about learning, because it is!

Combine these mental push-ups with the right diet, a fitness program, and a few brain boosting herbal supplements, and your focus will be sharp while your cognitive ability will improve significantly.

The more you practice using your brain in various, challenging ways, the better you will get at using it. The better you take care of your brain’s health, the more efficiently and easily it will work, and the longer it will work as well.

How Brain is Connected to Your Gut

Your brain is very connected to your gut. We have a symbiotic relationship with every microbe living inside us, and the highest concentration of microbes is in our gut. In addition, parasitical influences, like candida running rampant throughout our body causing us to crave junk food, can be traced back to intestinal health.

Speaking of candida, this fungus has been identified as a possible cause and a definite contributor to depression. Getting your intestinal health up to par is the most important first step in increasing your intelligence. Healthy gut = healthy body = healthy brain.

Good bacterial health is necessary for balanced hormones. Gut bacteria produce 90% to 95% of our serotonin, the key neurotransmitter responsible for regulating mood. We need bacteria to assimilate B vitamins, which are essential to the function of the nervous system and the brain. Without enough B vitamins, we can’t concentrate well.

Gluten also leads to an overabundance of Candida and a host of

other problems in the gut and the whole body which directly affect the brain’s ability to function.

Brain Boosting Herbs

If you’re looking for a quick boost to finish a term paper, there are lots of herbs and other things you can do right away. If you’re looking to increase your cognitive abilities over a period of time, and enjoy life with a clear head and all the focus you need, then the first step for most people is to kill the candida and balance the gut, so don’t skip that section above!

Bacopa

Bacopa is used to treat ADHD, anxiety, brain disorders, poor memory, and tension. Bacopa has been shown to stimulate brain function and improve cognition skills and memory. It also increases serotonin, a brain chemical known to help sooth and relax the mind.

Ginseng

Ginseng is a well-known stimulant that can reduce stress, increase focus and memory, and raise metabolism and energy levels.

Sage

Sage has been shown to improve memory. Sage is being investigated as a potential treatment for Alzheimer’s disease.

Gota kola

Gota kola renews nerve functions, fights premature aging, aids circulation, and improves memory and intelligence.

Rosemary

Rosemary stimulates the pituitary gland, which produces the HGH (human growth hormone) needed to regulate weight and look younger. It also improves memory, along with a host of other benefits.

Rhodiola Rosea

Rhodiola Rosea has been shown to increase energy levels, reduce fatigue, and improve cognitive ability (specifically: associative thinking, short-term memory, calculation, concentration, and speed of audiovisual perception)

Ashwagandha

This herb is to Ayurvedic medicine as ginseng is to Chinese medicine. People use ashwagandha for improving cognitive ability and it treats many other health problems from infertility to inflammation.

Vitamins, Minerals, Fats, and Other Nutrition Our Brains Need

A deficiency in any one of the following nutrients can lead to brain health issues. Even less than optimal levels can impair cognitive function.

Fats

Numerous studies have proven that eating a balanced diet with healthy fats, and/or a fatty acid supplement with omega 3s, are imperative for all brain functions. It’s no wonder, since the brain is about 60% fat (if you exclude water, which makes up about 70%). DHA is a fatty acid chain that is one of the major building blocks of the brain, critical for optimal brain health and function. Of the many fatty acids that benefit the

brain and offer noticeable cognitive improvement, DHA is the most significant. Balanced healthy fats are also needed to properly assimilate B vitamins.

B Vitamins

B vitamins are the vitamins of the nervous system and they are needed for the numerous functions critical to every cell in the body. B vitamins are essential for hormone production, stress management, and the metabolism of carbohydrates, proteins and fats. B vitamin deficiencies are not uncommon, and lead to many physical and mental illnesses. Anyone suffering from an inability to concentrate, PMS or other hormonal issues, insomnia, depression, or virtually any other mental health issues should reach first for B complex.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is more than an anti-oxidant and necessary vitamin for fighting infections and viruses, it is necessary to synthesize the neurotransmitter norepinephrine. It also helps the body flush heavy metals such as iron and copper from the brain.

Vitamin D

Normal brain development and function is dependent on vitamin D. Deficiencies have been proven to impair cognitive abilities.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is essential to maintain the integrity of cell membranes. Among other symptoms, a deficiency in this vitamin manifests in neurological symptoms including injury to sensory nerves and impaired coordination and balance.

Calcium

The brain requires calcium for secretion of neurotransmitters. The body maintains a specific level of calcium in the blood at all times, pulling calcium from the bones, if the level in the blood drops too low. So deficiencies generally affect bone health, not the brain.

Iodine

The thyroid requires iodine to produce its hormones, which are used in the myelination of the central nervous system. It is also critical in the development of the brain, therefore deficiencies during pregnancy can result in various neurodevelopmental deficits from mild cognitive deficits to mental retardation.

Iron

Iron is essential for proper development of the brain cells that produce myelin and for the synthesis of neurotransmitters. An iron deficiency during fetal development can cause permanent learning and memory deficits; childhood deficiency also causes cognitive impairment.

Magnesium

Magnesium is essential for metabolic reactions required for brain function. Deficiency results in neurological and muscular symptoms.

Selenium

Selenium is required for antioxidant enzymes in the brain and other tissues.

Zinc

Zinc plays a role in neurotransmission as well as catalytic, structural, and regulatory roles. Deficiencies can cause congenital malformations, deficits in learning, and other deficits including attention and learning.

Choline

Choline is another essential nutrient needed for myelination of nerves, neurotransmitter synthesis, and cell membranes and other structures of the brain and nervous system. Deficiency is related to cognitive defects.

Antioxidants

Your brain uses a lot of oxygen, and therefore, it is highly susceptible to free radical damage. This is why antioxidants are critical brain boosters. They protect brain cells by neutralizing free radical damage and preventing premature brain cell aging. Anthocyanins, the antioxidants that are found in berries, have been found to be particularly beneficial to the brain.

Food that’s Good For Our Brains

When you talk about food for the brain, cold-water fish top the list due to their fat content. Fish like salmon, sardines, trout, mackerel, and cod contain significant amounts of omega-3 fatty acids and essential amino acids in proteins that build healthy brain cell membranes and improve cognitive function.

Other great foods for the brain (especially if you’re vegetarian or vegan) include:

- Avocados, pumpkin seeds, various nuts, and other oils containing healthy fats along with vitamin E

- Leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables provide antioxidants and brain defending carotenoids
- Berries give the brain vitamin C, create healthy connections between brain cells, and protect brain cells against free radicals with antioxidants.
- Turmeric’s active ingredient, curcumin, detoxifies the brain.
- Cayenne can wake you up like nothing else, rushing blood to the brain. Cayenne is a great supplement to take with other remedies.
- Ginger protects the brain and has some of the same effects as cayenne, as far as waking up the senses and increasing blood flow.
- Pretty much all produce nourishes the body and therefore the mind.

Essential Oils for Cognitive Function

Many essential oils are great for temporarily boosting cognitive function, and there are some combinations that work particularly well. Three drops of rosemary with two drops of lemon is a simple recipe to boost memory. Four drops of cypress with one drop of rosemary is another recipe for brain power. So many essential oils offer powerful and beneficial effects with the brain. In particular, rosemary is proven to increase memory by up to 75%. Peppermint, lavender, cedarwood, and sage are other essential oils particularly notable for proven abilities to increase brain function, but the list doesn’t end there. If you happen to have any essential oil around, give it a sniff and see what happens. Better quality oils produce better results.

Use It or Lose it

Our brain works much like the rest of the body in that it is a “use it or lose it” organ. If you don’t use your brain enough, your cognitive abilities suffer. People who really think more than the average person, like scientists and professors, are less likely to suffer from Alzheimer’s and other degenerative diseases of the brain.

Studies show that learning a new language increases intelligence measurably. It’s not just languages though. Learning anything complicated that takes lots of time and practice, that uses the brain in many different ways, will have a noticeable effect on intelligence. If speaking another language isn’t in the cards, learning to play a musical instrument, mathematics, or learning computer languages can offer the same benefits. Learning how to develop websites, for instance, is an excellent way to exercise the brain. I personally had an IQ increase of 6 points after spending a few years learning HTML, PHP, CSS. There are also countless apps and websites with daily brain-teasers and exercises. Most of us know that reading increases our intelligence, but processing a variety of information has a greater effect than just reading fiction or a single other genre. All reading, whether it be fiction, magazine articles, blog posts, or historical, has benefit and can work our brains in different ways.

Exercise itself is huge for brain health! Being physically fit has been show to help with concentration. Exercise regulates proper hormone production, and exercise is the best way to take a break from an arduous brain task.

Be sure to keep taking those free IQ assessment tests when you can, too. What better way to raise your IQ than to practice taking various different IQ tests? There are also lots of toys and games like the classic Rubik Cube. If you really want to

turn your noggin into the mind of a brainiac, playing with brain teasers, puzzle toys, crossword puzzles and the like should be a hobby. Collect them and use them on a regular basis.

Breathe Right

Take deep, slow breaths. Breathe so that your abdomen expands with each breath and your ribcage compresses with each exhale. Read How to Breathe for more.

Drink Plenty of Water

Most people are chronically dehydrated. Coffee and sodas are only making it worse. Our brain is made up of 75% water. Sometimes when concentration seems impossible and the day feels like it's spiraling out of control, chugging a few cups of water can change perception and get things back on track. .

Maximum Brain Function Regimen

Obviously, I eat well, typically consuming lots of produce with beneficial fats, enzymes, antioxidants, and all the other nutrients my body needs. But sometimes I need a boost. If I am tired, having trouble focusing, can't figure something out, or am in need of some brain help for any reason, I have a protocol I use.

I juice equal parts turmeric, lemon, and ginger. I make about ½ of a cup total, spike it with as much cayenne as I can handle, and take the shot. I follow that up with a B vitamin complex, Shillington's Brain Tonic, and then Shillington's Blood Detox. If there's any chance I have some candida going on (which always impacts my focus) I take about 15 SF722 and 5 FloraMend as well.

And then I make my salad for the day.

If you've got a routine you love that gets your mind just right, whether it's for increasing focus and cognition or elevating your mood, please share with us in the comments below.

Shillington's Brain Tonic Recipe (or click here to purchase)

This is such an amazing formula, not just for overall long-term brain health, but also to give the brain a boost when it needs it the most.

(Mix the following by volume, and make a standard tincture (click here for instructions) using 100 proof vodka as your menstrum.)

- 15 – parts Gingko Leaf
- 1 – part Gotu Kola Herb
- 1 – part Calamus Root
- 1 – part Rosemary Flowers
- 1 – part Cayenne Pepper
- Optional:- 1 part Kola Nut

A 'part' is a measurement by volume. Blend all ingredients together and make into a tincture using a 50 – 50 Blend of Alcohol and distilled water. For more, see *How to Make a Tincture.*

A Dropperful is considered to be about 1/2 way up the dropper from a two ounce bottle.

Be sure to shake well before each use.

Conclusion

The most important and significant thing you can do to increase your concentration and other cognitive abilities right away without making any lifestyle changes is to breathe

right, take a B vitamin complex, a dropperful of brain tonic (or other herbal combination for brain function), drink water, and do a few squats. For long term, taking something like Shillington's Brain Tonic, and the right diet makes for a more intelligent, and aware person who isn't just trying to make it through the day.

If your mind is sluggish, detox. If you smoke anything, stop. It all impairs brain function. So do pharmaceuticals and alcohol. As stated, a healthy body = a healthy mind. An unhealthy body, i.e., a body full of drugs and other toxins, with limited nutrition and little ability to absorb it, makes for a brainwashed sheep who simply tries to make it through the day without getting slaughtered.

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington's Brain Tonic
- B Complex – Thorne Research
- Shillington's Cayenne Tincture
- Krill Oil
- Omega-3 w/CoQ10 – Thorne Research

Further Reading:

- *How to breathe*
- *Mental Health, Physical Health & B Vitamins – Nature's Valium*
- *The Fascinating Bacteria in our Gut, and How it Affects Our Whole Lives*
- *How to Make a Tincture*
- *How to Kill Candida and Balance Your Inner Ecosystem*
- *The Brain Boosting Benefits of Gingko Biloba*
- *How I overcame depression naturally*
- *How Gluten can Affect Your Brain, Gut, and Skin*
- *Alzheimer's*

Sources:

- *10 Supplements You Can Take Today to Enhance Your Intelligence*
- *Brain Herbs Boost IQ Results*
- *Brain Boosting Herbs*
- *Micronutrients And Cognitive Function*
- *Foods and Vitamins that Improve Memory and Natural Brain Function*
- *Brain Health Dramatically Improved by Intake of Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Fish Oils*
- *Rhodiola Rosea: Nature's Adaptogenic Herb for the Brain*
- *B Vitamins*
- *Vitamin D*