

Introduction

The *Cranium Crunches Workbook* was designed to be used by individuals interested in maximizing their cognitive abilities using the workbook's structured program of exercises or activities on their own or, as is the focus of this manual, by those individuals who are part of a larger group of motivated participants (e.g., in a retirement community or senior center). Group-based programs have some real advantages, as participants are more accountable to attend the sessions and be fully engaged. Also, the social interaction and support adds meaningful benefits to one's quality of life.

This *Cranium Crunches Workbook Instructor's Manual* has been developed as a guide to instructors or facilitators in the planning and implementation of the *Cranium Crunches Workbook*, which I sincerely hope you will find helpful in your dedicated efforts to help maintain the brain health of the population you serve.

If you are interested in learning more about facilitating high-quality cognitive stimulation programs (and demonstrating that to residents, participants, and potential clients or employers), consider looking into the *Certified Cognitive Stimulation Instructor (CCSI) Program*. You can find more information about the *CCSI Program* at the end of this instructor's manual.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Who, What, Where, When, and Why of Cognitive Stimulation Programs	2
How to Use the Workbooks	9
Suggested Curriculum	20
Other Features in the Cranium Crunches Workbooks	26

Who, What, Where, When, and Why of Cognitive Stimulation Programs

Who should participate?

This is one of the most frequently asked (and most important) questions asked about group-based cognitive stimulation programs. First, we should start by saying that Cranium Crunches and similar types of programs were not designed to help people with fairly advanced dementia. When people have dementia that has progressed to the point where they are not able to make new memories, even with a lot of practice and support, then doing cognitive exercise is probably not going to help them improve their ability to make new memories. The reducing effectiveness of cognitive stimulation activities as cognitive impairment worsens may occur because there has been too much brain damage or because the types of activities that have been shown to help are too difficult for them to do. When people have more advanced impairments, then they often have a difficult time understanding the instructions and staying on task.

However, people who are doing fairly well from a cognitive standpoint can benefit as well as people who are just beginning to have some cognitive problems. Based on published research and our experience with cognitive stimulation programs, people who have mild cognitive impairment (i.e., their memory ability is worse than it should be for their age but not impaired enough for a dementia diagnosis) or people

who have early stage dementia (i.e., worsening memory, possibly to the point where living independently is becoming more difficult) can often benefit a great deal from a cognitive stimulation program. Note that even maintaining cognitive ability should be considered an improvement if there has been a long trajectory of decline.

We often offer two levels of classes in a community: one that is more challenging and one that provides more support. We have used Mini Mental State Exam (MMSE) scores to identify the appropriate group; however, the MMSE might not be available to people who are not licensed to conduct neuropsychological exams. People with MMSE scores of 24–30 go into the more challenging class, and people who score 16–23 go into a class with more support and fewer participants. If one doesn't have access to MMSE scores, the St. Louis University Mental Status (SLUMS) exam can also be used. The SLUMS exam can be downloaded for free from the Internet. SLUMS scores, like MMSE scores, range from 0–30, but the SLUMS exam is a little more difficult. We recommend people who score 21–30 on the SLUMS be in a more challenging class and people with scores of 12–20 be in a class with more support and fewer participants. However, it is important to just use these tests to determine the appropriateness of a group-based cognitive stimulation class and not use it to inform people about the cognitive impairment or dementia status, as that is the work of a licensed professional (e.g., medical doctor or licensed psychologist).

How often and how long?

In our experience, a typical cognitive stimulation class will be about 60 minutes long. But the time goes by fast. We will sometimes have longer classes, maybe 90 minutes long, if the group meets less frequently (e.g., once a week) or if they live in the greater community and it takes longer to get to the class than it would on a residential campus.

When residents are living independently and leading busy lives, then we often have classes once a week and try to give more homework. However, classes in an assisted living community can and should be more frequent, such as twice or even three times a week. Classes in skilled nursing or rehabilitation settings can be even more frequent, possibly four or five days a week.

How many participants?

The size of the classes can vary for many reasons, but we generally try to have smaller classes when the participants have more advanced cognitive impairment. For example, if participants generally have mild cognitive impairment or early stage dementia, then we might want to limit the class to 6–8 participants if there is only one instructor. However, a class of high-functioning independent participants can be as large as 20, even with just one instructor.

How do I motivate participants to start and maintain a cognitive stimulation program?

We need to inform people about the benefits of engaging in cognitively stimulating programs and experiences. Many studies have shown that increased cognitive stimulation as well as cognitive exercise programs can lead to improvements in cognitive ability, including the ability to pay attention and make new memories. This is important for potential participants to know.

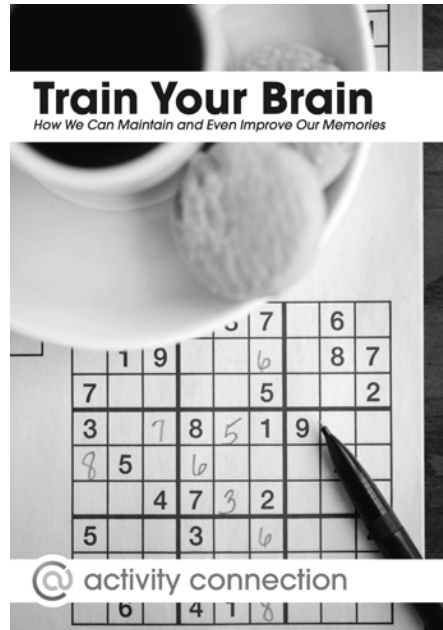
According to psychologists who study motivation, there are two main factors involved in motivation, and you can use these ideas to help motivate your residents and participants. First, people need to believe they can do the behavior; we call this self-efficacy. Second, people need to be aware of the benefits of doing the behavior; we call this outcome expectations (although I prefer to call this the “what’s-in-it-for-me effect”).

What’s in it for me?

People usually need to know the benefits of doing some behavior before they will be motivated to start doing it. It is possible to increase the overall motivation of a retirement community, for example, by having a series of programs discussing brain health research. We created a popular one-hour video just for this purpose, and it can be found on the ActivityConnection.com website, entitled *Brain Training: How to Maintain or Even Improve Memory Ability*. The video was

designed to show people the benefits of cognitive exercise (as well as physical exercise, proper nutrition, and social engagement). It is a research-based presentation, but it is designed to motivate a general audience by showing what's in it for them.

Another general way to tap into the what's-in-it-for-me effect is to know your residents and potential participants. You might consider asking them what their goals are or what they would like to improve in terms of their own cognition. Make a note of what they are interested in doing or improving and connect that to what is possible with a cognitive stimulation program. For example, they might want to be able to continue flying on planes to see out-of-state friends or family. Then you could point out that participating in a cognitive stimulation program could lead to better concentration and abilities to navigate airports. We also know that impairments in attention make falling more likely, so that might also factor into the goal of traveling. If the participant seems unmotivated, it might be helpful to remind them of their goals and how the program can help them achieve those goals.



Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the participant's belief that they are capable of doing some behavior or achieving a specific outcome. Research has repeatedly shown that people's self-efficacy for health-promoting behaviors predicts their overall physical activity, nutrition, and stress management. We have also seen self-efficacy affect engagement in cognitive stimulation programs. Fortunately, it is possible to increase some people's self-efficacy, which should improve their motivation. Here are some ways to potentially improve self-efficacy.

1. Experiences in mastering new skills and overcoming obstacles will increase self-efficacy. Start participants with a task they can complete and then the task difficulty can be increased. This is the idea behind the mini-sudoku puzzles in Cranium Crunches Workbooks. If people can do an easy mini-sudoku, then they might feel confident enough to try a 9 X 9 sudoku puzzle.
2. Seeing similar people who are successfully engaging in some behavior can lead to improved motivation. Group-based programs have a huge advantage in that they constantly show others what is possible. It is not uncommon to tell an older adult about a new program where they can exercise their brains and possibly improve their ability to make new memories and they look at you

and say, “Do you know how old I am?” Clearly, if they have an attitude like that, then they likely do not possess the motivation to do the work. They probably don’t think they can do it. However, it would be somewhat nonsensical for someone to claim they are too old to do brain exercises if they are surrounded by people of the same age.

3. Consider publishing a newsletter where successful class participants tell their story about being in the cognitive stimulation class and seeing results. Maybe include a picture of the successful participants. Seeing that person, who might be like them, can motivate someone who has low self-efficacy.

Consider bringing in additional materials

- Word searches
- More sudoku puzzles
- iPads and other tablets to use the many apps that are available for cognitive stimulation
- Guest presenters
- Brain health articles
- Ted Talks and discussions
- Great Courses and other lifelong education materials

How to Use the Workbooks

Pre- and Posttest Assessments Introduction

One of the many valuable features of Cranium Crunches Workbooks are the pre- and posttest assessments to be done before and after people complete a Cranium Crunches Workbook. The purpose of the assessments is to measure improvement in cognition, including attention. Doing the pre- and posttest assessments may help motivate people to work harder as they recognize improvement based on their level of work and commitment. We have also seen that when the word gets out that participants saw actual improvements, others in the community have been more motivated to participate in the available cognitive stimulation programming (although an individual’s score should be kept confidential, unless the participant wants to share it with others).

How to Administer Pre- and Posttest Assessments

You have some flexibility in how the pre- and posttest assessments are administered. But, in general, it is recommended that participants do all of the pretest assessments in one sitting, before they do any activities in the workbook. Ideally, participants would have a partner to help with the testing, but it may be possible to do them by oneself, especially if the participant is not experiencing any cognitive impairment. But to maximize the validity of the assessment,

we recommend that similar testing conditions are present for the pretest and the posttest (e.g., do them in the same order both times, and if the participant has an assistant during the pretest, they should have an assistant for the posttest). The level of distractions in the environment (e.g., people talking) can also have a significant impact on the scores.

Be sure to record all the scores of both the pretest and posttest assessments in the workbook. The posttests can be completed after the entire book is complete or after the program is complete (e.g., a six-week, twice-a-week program that involves cognitive stimulation, brain health education, and a possible physical exercise component).

It's important to make every effort to avoid making participants feel like they are being judged when doing the assessments. Remind people that the assessments are used only so individuals can see improvement in themselves; the assessments are not in any way a competition **nor are they a medical evaluation**.

What You Will Need for the Assessments

You will need timers to measure how long participants take to complete the assessments. It is helpful if the timers have a start and stop function, such as a stopwatch. Most smartphones and tablets have a stopwatch function. There are also easy-to-use online stopwatches (simply search

“online stopwatch”). Ideally the testing will take place in a relatively quiet and distraction-free environment. Finally, we highly recommend that instructors and assistants try each assessment themselves before meeting with participants to administer them.

Instructions for Assessment #1: Proper Nouns

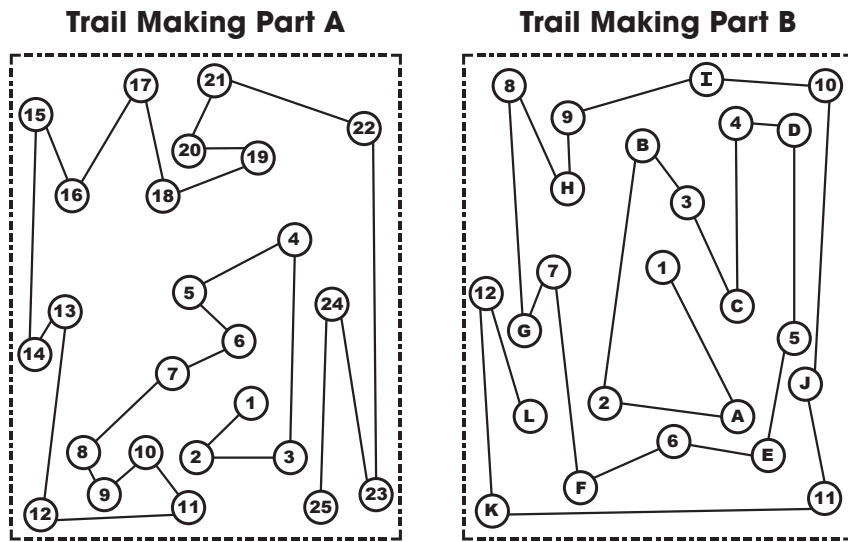
Instruct participant(s) to try to fill in each blank with a man's first name that begins with that letter of the alphabet. If they get stuck on a particular letter, encourage skipping it until the rest of the alphabet is completed. Set the timer for two minutes. If the participant finishes all of them in less than two minutes (we don't expect that), then document how long it took (e.g., one minute 50 seconds). If the two-minute timer goes off before all of them are completed (that is what we expect), count how many names were written down and document that number on the Assessment Score Card (see Table of Contents for page number).

Instructions for Assessment #2: Trail Making Exercise Explanation

The Trail Making Exercise, initially used in 1944, has two parts. Part A consists of encircled numbers from 1 to 25 randomly spread across a sheet of paper. The object of the test is to connect the numbers in order, beginning with 1 and ending with 25, in as little time as possible. Part B is

more complex than Part A because it requires the person to connect numbers and letters in an alternating pattern (1–A–2–B–3–C, etc.) in as little time as possible. Participants should try to keep their pen or pencil on the paper as much as possible. If the participant has someone helping administer the assessment, they can quickly correct any mistakes and have the participant draw the correct line. But it is important to give the feedback very quickly and avoid a discussion of the mistake, as that will obviously affect the score. Also, be sure to create similar conditions when the assessment is done, after completing the workbook (e.g., presence of instructor or assistant). Document time to complete the task in the Assessment Score Card (see Table of Contents for page number).

Trail Making Key



Assessment #3: Circle C's Exercise Explanation

The Circle C's assessment is a variant of a commonly used neuropsychology tool called the *Continuous Performance Task*. The instrument was designed to measure selective and sustained attention as well as visual scanning. This simple test will give a measure of one's attention capacity. This assessment can be done alone or with an assistant.

The participant needs to find all 25 C's and circle them as fast as they can. Time needed to complete the assessment will be measured and recorded on the Assessment Score Card (see Table of Contents for page number).

Circle C's Key

Ⓒ	H	Q	R	Ⓒ	P	L
W	Ⓒ	F	Z	M	Ⓒ	P
R	S	Ⓒ	V	Ⓒ	M	Ⓒ
M	B	X	Z	A	Ⓒ	H
P	U	Y	Ⓒ	Ⓒ	Q	Ⓒ
O	I	T	R	W	O	U
Ⓒ	A	D	S	F	G	J
S	F	H	K	Ⓒ	L	Ⓒ
I	J	G	H	T	Ⓒ	D
Ⓒ	W	Ⓒ	U	Z	F	F
K	M	R	Ⓒ	A	M	H
Ⓒ	U	O	T	E	N	Ⓒ
W	I	Ⓒ	G	J	X	Ⓒ
N	M	G	H	I	Ⓒ	O
O	Ⓒ	F	Ⓒ	R	Q	S

Brain Maps

The brain maps are a novel feature in the *Cranium Crunches Workbooks* that allow instructors to organize brain exercise classes in order to facilitate a whole brain workout. The brain maps are also helpful in communicating to participants the benefit of doing certain exercises, which can help motivate people to fully engage the program. Participants can connect the Cranium Crunches activities with certain parts of the brain and certain cognitive and mental abilities. For example, activities that exercise the frontal lobes will generally be exercising concentration and attention. Instructors can even connect the brain maps to goals that individual participants might establish for themselves. If a participant reports, for example, that one of their goals is to improve their ability to make new memories of things they need to do, then they can be reminded that exercising their frontal lobes can improve their ability to concentrate, which can in turn improve their ability to make new memories.

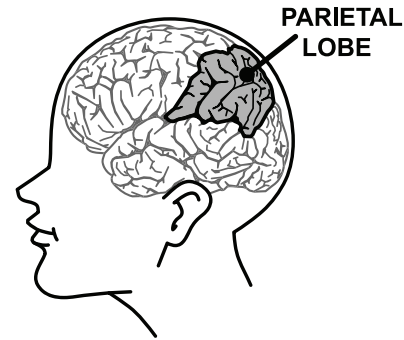
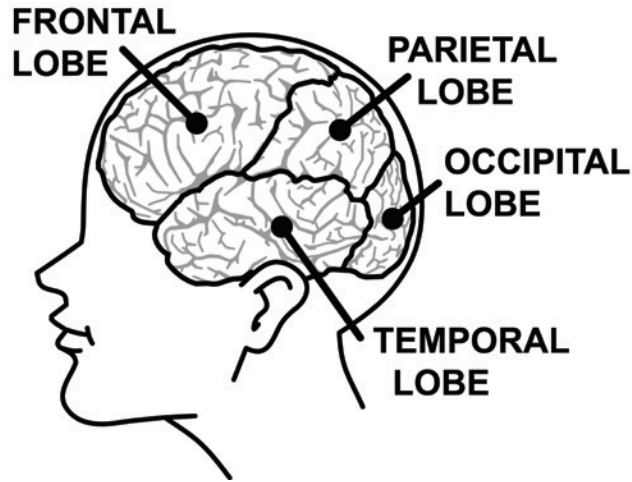
Consider reminding participants that one of the goals of a good cognitive stimulation program is to engage in a whole brain workout, just as you might want to engage in a whole body workout when doing a physical exercise program. When doing physical exercises, many people have their favorite exercises, but those exercises become less effective at burning calories, building muscle, and increasing heart rate as the body becomes more efficient. Fitness trainers try to get people to vary their exercises and not just focus on one or two muscle groups. Similarly, the *Cranium Crunches Workbook*

was designed to encourage brain exercisers to engage and use different parts of their brains and strengthen their entire brain, not just one region. With all that said, research has shown that improving attention and concentration can lead to real-world improvements in the things we all need to do to stay active and independent (e.g., making new memories and remembering to do things in the future). This principle is important, as many brain health conscious individuals will do a very limited set of cognitive stimulation activities. For example, they might say, “Oh, I don’t need to come to your class...I play bridge” or “I am an avid reader.” While those are excellent activities that promote brain health, research suggests that improvements in cognitive and memory abilities require doing new and challenging activities, particularly activities that require sustained attention and concentration. The brain maps should help communicate the above principles.

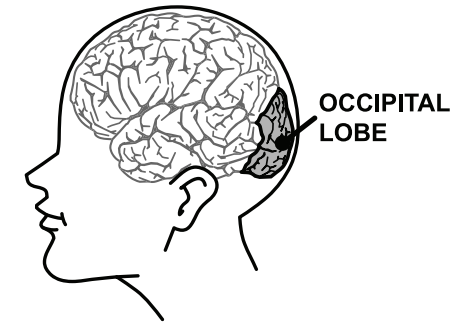
A participant might ask: “Why are there more Cranium Crunches that focus on the frontal lobes, as compared to the other three lobes of the brain?”

Answer: Research has shown that improving frontal lobe functioning (and the ability to concentrate) can lead to improvements in a wide range of abilities and activities, such as the ability to make new memories, the ability to remember things that one needs to do in the future, driving abilities, and a reduction in falls.

Each side of our brain (left and right) has a frontal lobe, a temporal lobe, a parietal lobe, and an occipital lobe.

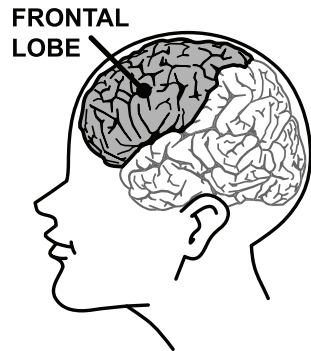


Spatial abilities
Integrate sensory inputs
Navigate through the environment
Mathematical abilities

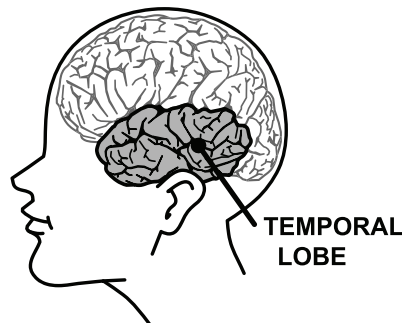


Visual perception
Recognizing things in the environment
Color perception
Movement perception

Brain Maps Quick Reference Guide



Executive functioning
Concentration
Sustained attention
Avoiding distraction



Producing language
Comprehending language
Perceiving emotion in language
Music perception

Completing Cranium Crunches Activities

Cranium Crunches were designed to be completed by the participant, either by keeping the pages intact in their workbook or tearing out the pages to work on outside of the class. Each participant needs their own workbook. When doing the activities in a group, try to give participants enough time so most people can finish the activity. Sometimes someone will need more time to complete an exercise and can be encouraged to finish after class or at home. Others will finish much earlier than the rest of the group, so it is recommended the instructor have some additional activities for those who finish early (e.g., a word search, crossword, or other activity). At the very least, you can always give people

a fairly long word (such as *hippocampus*, which is where new memories are made in the brain) and ask the quick participant to generate as many words as they can using letters from the word (e.g., campus, hippo, macho, shop, hum, hip, cam, sham, pup, chip, puma, chomp). You can do this by writing the word on the back of the sheet of paper they had been using.

Most activities take approximately five minutes to complete, but try to adjust expectations and the timing based on the participants and their unique needs. For example, if participants seem to be getting fatigued, you might allow more discussion rather than move on to another activity. Or, if participants are having a difficult time with an activity, you might choose to skip it. The bottom line is to be flexible in order to maximize the effectiveness and enjoyment of a program, as every class and group of participants is different. Ultimately, of course, the participants need to have fun or they will be much less likely to continue coming to the class.

Other Suggestions for a Successful Cognitive Stimulation Program

1. Try each activity yourself prior to doing it with a group of participants.
2. Limit the size of the class to no more than 20 or so people if you are the only instructor.

3. Stay positive, have fun, and try to not set up a competitive atmosphere.
4. Try to get volunteers to help run the classes. Volunteers can be particularly helpful when doing pre- and posttests. Additional assistance can also be very useful when there are participants with more severe cognitive impairment who just need a little support in doing the activities.
5. These activities are generally not appropriate for people with more advanced cognitive impairment (e.g., mid-stage dementia).
6. Consider incorporating an educational component of the class and bring in interesting articles or videos on brain health or related topics.
7. Try to encourage participants to continue a program of regular cognitive stimulation, even if the class has ended. Research has repeatedly shown that improvements in memory and cognition are dose-dependent. In other words, the more cognitive stimulation one does, the greater the memory improvements and the longer the effects last. Research has shown that even an occasional booster session with 60–90 minutes of activities once a month can allow improvements to persist over a longer period of time.

8. Remind participants that cognitive exercise is like physical exercise, in that you can't do it for a month or two and expect the benefits to persist forever.
9. Take attendance and try to follow up with people who miss class.

Suggested Curriculum

Every cognitive stimulation class is different, depending on the instructor, participants' abilities and interests, the number of participants in a class, the cognitive ability of participants, whether activities outside of this workbook will be used (e.g., other cognitively stimulating activities or educational materials), and how much the participants want to discuss related topics. I believe we need to be flexible in how we approach cognitive stimulation courses. With that said, we have tried to provide some suggested curriculums, with the goal of engaging participants in a whole brain workout, maximizing the effects of the program, and maximizing fun.

Most cognitive stimulation classes meet for about one hour. A typical one-hour class can complete approximately eight *Cranium Crunches*, although that number can vary. For example, if the instructor allows a little discussion or presents educational information about brain health, then that number might go down. It is fine if you don't get through eight activities each class. But with the assumption that a

typical class can complete about eight *Cranium Crunches*, we have developed a suggested curriculum that is based on the following guidelines. Please note that giving extra activities for homework is always an option. For example, if you get through six activities and had planned to do eight activities, then you can assign the other two activities as homework. However, in our experience, not everyone will complete the homework.

A typical cognitive stimulation class can include:

- » 5–6 Attention, Concentration, and Executive Functioning *Cranium Crunches*
- » 1–2 Language and/or Word Fluency *Cranium Crunches*
- » 1 Visual Memory or Social/Humor *Cranium Crunches*

If you are able to get through eight activities each class, then the *Cranium Crunches Workbook* will take approximately 12 class meetings to complete.

Suggested 12-Day Curriculum

Day 1

1. Trail Making
2. Letter Symbol
3. Dot-to-Dot
4. Mini Sudokus
5. Split Words
6. Proper Nouns
7. Mental and Shape Rotation
8. Cartoon Captions

Day 2

1. Trail Making
2. Alphabet Code
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Mini Sudokus
6. Verb Generation
7. Word Search
8. Mental and Shape Rotation
9. Cartoon Captions

Day 3

1. Trail Making
2. Dot-to-Dot
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Junk Drawer
6. Split Words
7. Proper Nouns
8. Word Search

Day 4

1. Alphabet Code
2. Trail Making
3. Letter Symbol
4. Anagrams
5. Mini Sudokus
6. Split Words
7. State Exercise
8. Word Search

Day 5

1. Alphabet Code
2. Dot-to-Dot
3. Anagrams
4. Mini Sudokus
5. Junk Drawer
6. Proper Nouns
7. Word Search
8. Mental and Shape Rotation
9. Cartoon Captions

Day 6

1. Trail Making
2. Process of Elimination
3. Anagrams
4. Mini Sudokus
5. Junk Drawer
6. Split Words
7. Verb Generation
8. Word Search

Day 7

1. Trail Making
2. Dot-to-Dot
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Split Words
6. Rhyming
7. Word Search
8. Mental and Shape Rotation

Day 8

1. Alphabet Code
2. Dot-to-Dot
3. Anagrams
4. Mini Sudokus
5. Junk Drawer
6. Proper Nouns
7. Word Search
8. Mental and Shape Rotation
9. Cartoon Captions

Day 9

1. Trail Making
2. Letter Symbol
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Split Words
6. Link Letters
7. Verb Generation
8. Word Search

Day 10

1. Trail Making
2. Alphabet Code
3. Anagrams
4. Mini Sudokus
5. Junk Drawer
6. Split Words
7. Rhyming
8. Word Search
9. Cartoon Captions

Day 11

1. Trail Making
2. Dot-to-Dot
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Mini Sudokus
6. Proper Nouns
7. Word Search
8. Mental and Shape Rotation

Day 12

1. Trail Making
2. Alphabet Code
3. Process of Elimination
4. Anagrams
5. Split Words
6. State Exercise
7. Right on Target
8. Cartoon Captions

Other Features in the Cranium Crunches Workbooks

We have tried to answer common questions that participants ask in the Frequently Asked Questions section of each workbook. We encourage you to review this information before beginning a class.

1. I am concerned about memory loss, as I sometimes have difficulty doing these activities. Should I be concerned?

These activities get easier over time, and we don't expect perfect performance. We exercise mental abilities that are challenging, and we have created the Cranium Crunches to target key cognitive abilities and regions of the brain. Please keep in mind that the harder you work, the greater the gains. As with physical fitness programs, we often need to do exercises that are difficult (at first) in order to improve our overall physical fitness. The same is true for the brain. But if you are or someone you know is concerned about memory issues, it is important to visit a doctor or other healthcare professional. Some causes of dementia-like symptoms are reversible, and it might be important to get a good medical evaluation.

2. I am trying to keep track of the number of cognitively stimulating activities I engage in each day and week. How

do I know whether an activity is cognitively stimulating? For example, I play bridge each week—does that count?

An activity is usually considered cognitively stimulating if you cannot successfully do the activity while thinking about something else. For example, if you cannot think about a meal you are planning for the next day while successfully playing bridge, then bridge is a cognitively stimulating activity. However, if you can daydream while driving along a familiar route, then driving along that route is not cognitively stimulating. On the other hand, it might be cognitively stimulating to drive in an unfamiliar city while trying to find a particular address, as most people cannot do that successfully while simultaneously daydreaming.

3. How often should I do these Cranium Crunches? When can I stop doing them?

Doing brain exercises is a lot like doing physical exercises. The more you do them, the better they work. The more you challenge yourself with difficult exercises, the better the outcomes. And, just like physical exercise, brain exercise needs to be done continually in order to yield long-term and meaningful benefits. If you want to truly maximize your memory and cognitive ability, I would recommend doing Cranium Crunches most days of the week and also doing word searches, sudoku puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, and more (see the list of *50 Cognitively Stimulating Activities*).

4. How much time should I be spending on Cranium Crunches on any given day?

It would be optimal to spend at least 30 minutes doing Cranium Crunches and similar mental exercises most days of the week. Some activities will take longer, and some will go quicker. But doing two Attention and Concentration Cranium Crunches and at least one other Cranium Crunches activity from another category (e.g., Language and Word Fluency) would be a great start. But feel free to add in your own mental activities, particularly the ones that are meaningful to you, such as hobbies, socializing, continued learning, reading, and doing your favorite word games or puzzles.

5. How do I know if the Cranium Crunches are helping?

We have included some standard neuropsychology assessments at the beginning and end of this book. These assessments can give an indication of whether you are experiencing improvements. Most people will notice cognitive improvements in daily life if they are actively working on brain health.

6. What if I make a mistake while doing a sudoku or one of the other Cranium Crunches? Does it still count as a brain exercise?

Yes, it still counts! The key goal of brain exercise is to engage the mind. So, even if a mistake was made, you still exercised your mind and brain.

7. What happens when I finish my workbook?

First, congratulate yourself on a job well done. Second, keep in mind you need to continue engaging in regular mental exercise in order to maintain your goals. You can get another *Cranium Crunches Workbook*, get a tablet (e.g., iPad) and use a cognitive stimulation app, do sudoku and other puzzle books, and most importantly never stop learning! Also, review the *50 Cognitive Stimulation Activities* found on page 20 of the Read and Learn section for other fun ways to exercise your brain.

Read and Learn Section of Cranium Crunches Workbooks

The idea behind the Read and Learn content is to better inform people about their brains and brain health. This is a technique that has been shown by researchers to help the results of cognitive stimulation programs, possibly because it motivates people. Also, having an educational component of a cognitive stimulation program can capture the interest of people and facilitate conversation. We have also included information about the brain maps in this section so people are aware of why we are doing the activities in the workbook.

Consider Becoming a Certified Cognitive Stimulation Instructor

The Certified Cognitive Stimulation Program includes eight DVD trainings and eight online tests to demonstrate proficiency. Thousands of professionals have completed a similar certification that was delivered live, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. So, Dr. Winningham partnered with ActivityConnection.com to offer this valuable series of courses that can change your residents' and patients' lives.

The training videos teaches professionals how to:

- Maximize residents' memory ability
- Decrease residents' chance of developing dementia
- Improve social support and engagement in the community
- Take advantage of a physical exercise program to maximize memory ability
- Motivate residents to engage in activities and programming
- Overcome the effects of depression and apathy in residents
- Manage challenging behaviors in people who have cognitive impairment
- Many, many other topics that will dramatically increase the ability of staff to maximize residents' quality of life

After viewing each of the eight instructional videos, healthcare professionals will be able to take an online test at their own pace. After each test is completed and passed, a certificate of completion will be issued. After all eight tests are successfully completed, a Certified Cognitive Stimulation Instructor diploma will be awarded.