



THINK FAST! WHY WORKING AGAINST THE CLOCK WORKS FOR YOUR BRAIN

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Think fast! The term brings me right back to elementary school where “monkey in the middle” and “red rover” filled recess hour. And though I’m a few years past my elementary playground days, thinking fast is certainly on my mind, as it is a hot topic in brain health.

Why are so many folks focused on fast thinking? Research suggests that training to “think faster” is a great way to preserve our daily thinking skills. Working against the clock tests all the skills we know are most challenged by aging, namely attention and quick and nimble thinking, as well as short-term memory and executive control.

At Total Brain Health, speed of processing training falls under the “Sharpen Skills” action step on our TBH Blueprint and is included in all of our programs as one of the many things we can do to stay sharp day-to-day. How can you put the science behind processing speed training to work?

- **Play Against the Clock.** Timed activities – board games, electronic-based activities, and the like – are easy, accessible, affordable and a great “think fast” workout. Playing against the clock is something we all seemed to move away from as we age and leave that proverbial playground behind. Yet doing so offers critical opportunities to challenge our processing speed. Timed training is one of the benefits of brain training software, which can also adjust the training level as we improve. However, we can readily get the same brain training workout from anything that requires us to think fast.
- **Think Fast Together.** We love when things get social! Working with others is a great way to challenge processing speed, since we are forced to respond to others quickly, problem solve as a group, and gain the many other brain boosting benefits of social engagement. It’s no wonder that experts recommend staying social for better cognitive outcomes. I personally love some of the social media games such as *Word Streak with Friends* for a great social-based speed workout with family and friends.
- **Don’t Miss Your Everyday Think Faster Chances.** One of the opportunities most missed is the multitude of small ways we can “think faster” each and every day. Jazz up mundane activities such as cutting vegetables for dinner or folding the laundry by challenging yourself to finish by the time the clock runs out! Learn a few new dance steps to a favorite fast-paced song, then get up on your feet for a much-needed work break and move to the beat.

I hope that this bit of “slow thinking” on what we really know about the cognitive benefits of speed of processing training helps you take action on the many ways we can all get a bit more game for our brains by playing against the clock.

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