



TOTAL BRAIN HEALTH FAIR STATION



SIGN ME UP!

TBH Focus:

Mind | *Stretch Your Mind*

The TBH Science:

Whenever we set out to learn something new and novel—in this case, letting our fingers do the talking by using them to form the variety of shapes and movements that compose American Sign Language (ASL)—we can make significant brain-health gains. ASL is a complex set of hand motions made in conjunction with facial expressions and body postures that is used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Mastering sign language is similar to mastering any new language—it requires us to try to comprehend and remember things we’ve never encountered before. Stretching our minds in order to understand and retain new information in this way spurs the production of neurons (brain cells) and synapses (the structures that connect brain cells), which together forms a “cognitive reserve”—a protective cushion in the event of future memory loss. In fact, one study, at Rush University, found that folks who remain intellectually engaged throughout life are 2.6 times less likely to develop dementia.

You Will Need:

- **An expert instructor who’s familiar with American Sign Language**
- **Chairs for 10 to 15 people, arranged in rows or a circle**
- **OPTIONAL: Handouts with information about ASL or the ASL alphabet that participants can take home in order to practice (an excellent resource for this is the website www.lifeprint.com)**

How It Works:

The expert will teach the participants basic ASL signs—letters of the alphabet, their names, simple words or phrases.

Variations:

Based on the number of participants and their abilities, the instructor can teach signs that are more or less complicated to learn.



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