



TOTAL BRAIN HEALTH[®] FAIR STATION


10-15
minutes


10-15
people

BRAINY BOARD GAMES

TBH Focus: MIND | *Stretch Your Mind, Sharpen Skills*

The TBH Science: It may sound like child's play, but a friendly bout of, say, Boggle is anything but: Playing games is a great way to flex cerebral muscles, stay a step ahead of memory loss late in life, and even stave off serious age-related brain problems: Studies have found that older adults who regularly play board games have a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Timed games are especially beneficial, because in order to beat the clock players are forced to stay focused, and to think quickly and nimbly. And in general, staying intellectually engaged throughout life is brain-protective: Researchers at Rush University, for example, found that people who reported a high level of intellectual engagement were 2.6 times less likely to develop dementia—perhaps because “stretching” the mind to learn and do novel things helps to promote the development of new brain cells and synapses, creating a “cognitive reserve” that serves as a cushion should memory loss strike. Either way, even the loser in a board game comes out a winner.

You Will Need:

- 3 or 4 card tables with seating for 2 to 4 at each table
- A staff member or volunteer to man each table
- Enough sets of brain-challenging board games for up to 10-15 people to play at once.

Look for games that have a time challenge element to get the full benefit of this station. You can also add a time limit to familiar games to show how we can play games we love, but add to their "brain boost" by playing against the clock. Rounds of the game should take less than 10 minutes so that everyone can try the station workout and then move to the next station.

Here are some of our favorite brainy board games: BOGGLE, ZIP-IT, BANANAGRAMS (time for 10 minutes then end game), SET, CHECKERS, MEMORY CONCENTRATION GAME (with playing cards or dedicated game with tiles)

- Stopwatch, timer, or other means of keeping time

How It Works: Participants will join a game at the station. The expert will explain the rules and oversee play for the duration of the allotted time.

Variations: **Up the Ante:** Choose more challenging games, such as SET, Math Dice, or Tangrams. Be sure to add the timer element!

Make It Easier: Set up less challenging games, such as Concentration (using a half deck of cards) or Spot It[®]. Don't use a timer.

