

# Brain Training 101

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Want a more powerful brain? Try these simple brain training techniques.

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A little bit of brain training can go a long ways towards better thinking. There are easy techniques for better or more creative thinking, such as brainstorming or just getting a good night's sleep. The idea here, though, is to train your brain in new habits. It can take some work, but once good habits are established, there is little extra effort involved in your new higher-level of thought.

There are many brain training routines you can work with. Here are two to get you started.

## Train Your Brain To Create Examples

{bot\_wrgoogle}Have you ever read something and only "almost" understood it? Often, this is because the author didn't use good examples, or perhaps not any at all. Suppose I tell you, "The reticular cortex is a part of the brain that discriminates among sensory inputs and stimuli to make you aware of those which are important." You might nod your head, especially if you've read about this. But your understanding may be a bit hazy.

It would be much clearer if I added, "For example, if you are looking for a business to buy, and you give some attention to that goal, you are essentially 'programing' the reticular activating system to bring anything relevant to your attention. Your eyes still look at the same scenery, and the same sounds enter your ears, but the non-essential is screened out, while the reticular cortex makes you notice the 'for sale' signs on stores or helps you 'tune into' conversations about business."

Now you understand better. A few more examples would probably help as well. If you want to really understand things, then, you need to have examples, and the simpler the better. If the speaker or author doesn't provide them, create your own. In fact, don't move on until you do.

Do this with your own ideas as well, whether you are explaining them to another person or just thinking to yourself. Make them as simple as you can, but not too simple. Think of several examples, as though you are preparing to explain the thought to a variety of different people. It could be argued that if you cannot give good examples, you don't fully understand an idea. Create examples until doing so becomes a habit, and you'll find that this kind of brain training leads to a better grasp of everything you learn.

## Train Your Brain To Be More Self-Aware

Being self-aware may not seem so important to effective brainpower, but it is. When you know yourself better, you can avoid the usual effects of ego and emotion in your seemingly "rational" thinking. Or you can at least take them into account.

Watch yourself, especially as you explain things or argue, and you'll become aware that much of what we call reasoning is really rationalization. You'll also see how common it is to try to win an argument or make a point at the expense of digging deeper and understanding something better. This probably can't be completely overcome, but being aware of what your mind is doing makes it possible to "correct course" and think more rationally.

Observe yourself. As with other types of brain training, the goal here is to repeat this process until it becomes a habit. The self-awareness that results will prevent you from getting into a rut in your thinking. For example, if you are aware that you have a strong desire for certain beliefs to be true, you'll question whether you've lowered the standards of evidence for them. Then you can explore the alternative views more rationally.

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