

SPOTLIGHT STORY

The benefits of art for brain health.

ART



Pacific Brain Wellness & Lifestyle Newsletter | OCTOBER 2021

ART

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Art, Creativity, and the Brain: What You Need to Know

The Benefits of Art for Brain Health



Sarah Kryzdzowski & Janelle Ng

Clinical psychologists for adult patients with mental and physical disorders and Memory Trainers with the Brain Health and Lifestyle Program under the auspices of the BCRC.

Art invites us to appreciate beauty, communicate ideas, and make sense of the world around us. The creative process does even more: it actively improves brain health by strengthening neural connections, reducing stress, and providing meaning.

As a creative process, it can be practiced, observed, and shared with others. Although many of us do not consider ourselves artists, we may already practice creativity in everyday life: selecting an outfit, preparing a meal, photographing a sunset, or decorating a room at home or in the office.

Our attraction to art and beauty reflects art's complementary roles in stimulating neuroplasticity and social connection and creating art jobs more of the brain to work than we might realize.

[Learn More](#)

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ONE MILLION MINUTES

Art for Everyone



Karen Miller, PhD
Senior Director, Brain Wellness & Lifestyle

When we engage in creative activities, we use different parts of the brain in new and stimulating ways. Whether you enjoy painting, visiting a museum, or doing something with your hands, or simply appreciating art, creativity can be an essential part of a brain-healthy lifestyle.

Art & Creativity Challenge



In the spirit of giving your whole brain a workout through art and creativity, consider taking on one of these challenges this month:

- **Enroll in a class that stretches your artistic skills.** Try something new, such as painting, ceramics, or drawing, or even cooking as flower arranging.
- **Visit a local museum.** If possible, go down a few rooms about what you see, or pick up a couple of prompts to put on your fridge as a reminder of the experience. Be sure to take a home object.
- **Collect artwork from young family and friends.** Consider creating a collage from these precious pieces. Using a photo board, arrange several of these creations, and, if you wish, frame the finished collage and hang it somewhere that brings you joy. I have my son's artwork collage framed in the family room. He may be 20 now, but seeing it brings me back to his elementary school years and always makes me smile.
- **Make your own greeting cards.** Get creative with paint, charcoal, markers, or pictures cut from magazines. Add a dash of humor or be funny things up, and then send your creations to friends. It's a fun way to connect your creativity while brightening someone else's day.

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THE BALANCED PLATE

The Art of Savoring



Holly Raposo, MS, RD
Registered Dietitian & Senior Brain Health Coach

This month's featured article highlights how creativity and artistic expression engage multiple areas of the brain, supporting memory, attention, problem-solving, and emotional well-being.

We often think of art as painting, music, or photography, but cooking is an art form too. Choosing ingredients, experimenting with flavors, arranging a colorful plate, and savoring a meal all make creativity while engaging our senses. By slowing down and experiencing food more fully, we can transform eating from a routine task into an enriching activity that nourishes both body and brain.

This month, consider approaching meals the way an artist approaches a blank canvas: with creativity, curiosity, and a willingness to discover something new. Small moments of sensory exploration can make everyday eating both more enjoyable and more meaningful.

- **Cook with creativity.** Try a new recipe, experiment with a different herb or spice, or challenge yourself to create a colorful meal using seasonal produce. The planning, problem-solving, and decision-making involved in cooking provide a wonderful form of cognitive exercise.
- **Engage all your senses.** Before taking a bite, notice the colors, aromas, textures, and sounds of your food. Pay attention to the crunch of an apple, the warmth of roasted squash, or the tanginess of lemon juice. Mindful eating helps us appreciate food more deeply while encouraging us to stay present in the moment.
- **Create a eating experience.** Visit a local farmers market, harvest festival, or farm-to-table event featuring seasonal produce. Or have your own tasting at home with friends or family. Compare several apple varieties, sample different winter squashes, or try foods prepared with the same ingredient in multiple ways. Exploring flavor, texture, and appearance turns eating into a creative and social experience that celebrates the food.

EVENTS & RESOURCES



Virtual Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Monday | 3-4 PM PT | Zoom

Join our Zoom support group designed for family members and close friends taking care of a loved one living with any stage of dementia. Nothing is too small! \$200/month. PacificBrainWellness.org | 2021-2022 | Sarah Kryzdzowski

[Register Now](#)



Wondering what to give this holiday?

Give yourself or someone you love personalized **Brain Health Coaching**. Together, we'll create practical, sustainable changes in areas such as physical activity, sleep, stress management, nutrition, and social engagement, all aimed at boosting brain health. Cognitive training and memory strategies can also be incorporated based on individual goals. Holiday gift certificates available.

[Contact Us](#)

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Community Education

Through a partnership between the **American Memory Loss Foundation (AMLF)** and **Pacific Neuroscience Institute Foundation (PNIF)**, we are expanding community education on memory loss, dementia, and brain health by providing free educational talks in local community centers, including AMLF's **Memory Loss Roadmap** to help individuals and families better understand and navigate memory concerns.

[See What We Are Up To](#)



Brain Wellness & Lifestyle

PROGRAM

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