

5 brain training programs backed by science

There are dozens of brain training programs out there, but don't be fooled. Many prey on older adults by making fantastical claims about their ability to protect against dementia. Yet they offer no proof.

You want something that works. Researchers in Australia looked at 18 commercially available programs tested on healthy adults over the age of 50, and identified a handful whose claims are supported by serious science. Here are five they rated high for delivering proven results.



Level One Rating

BrainHQ www.brainhq.com



What it offers: 29 online exercises for attention, brain speed, memory, people skills, navigation and intelligence.

Research behind it: 10 studies, 8 rated as high quality

Worth noting: BrainHQ game called “Double Decision” is based on highly acclaimed ACTIVE study, shown to reduce risk of dementia by up to 48 percent.

Cost: \$14 per month or \$96 for an annual subscription

CogniFit www.cognifit.com



What it offers: Personalized brain games to stimulate cognitive function and improve brain plasticity. Programs include a “55 and over” game.

Research behind it: 3 studies, 1 rated as high quality

Worth noting: A 2008 study reported that “people who played computer games showed an improvement in performance, but for people who used CogniFit, the improvement was significantly greater.”

Cost: \$19.95 a month or an annual plan for \$180

Level Two Rating

Cogmed www.cogmed.com



What it offers: Working memory training for people of all ages, including adults experiencing the natural effects of aging.

Research behind it: 1 high quality study

Worth noting: The Cogmed brain training method includes a coach who works with you during your training experience.

Cost: Fee is set by health care facilities that offer the service

MyBrainTrainer www.mybraintrainer.com



What it offers: A 21-day training program that features short, individual exercises designed to improve cognitive function and processing speed.

Research behind it: 1 high quality study

Worth noting: Features include a diary that allows you to track your performance against a variety of variables, including time of day and amount of sleep.

Cost: 3 months for \$9.95 or 1 year for \$29.95

Level Three Rating

Dakim Brain Fitness www.dakim.com



What it offers: More than 100 cognitive exercise types and thousands of individual exercises that feature video, graphics and music.

Research behind it: 1 study rated to be of moderate quality

Worth noting: Winner of the Edison Award for Innovation. Founded by Dan Michel after his father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's to provide a new method of brain fitness exercise to help prevent or slow dementia.

Cost: \$14.95 per month or \$79 for an annual subscription