

# Don's Seniors News

Brought to you by: Don Zahnle

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## Improve Your Mental Fitness by Rewiring Your Brain (and thus delaying the onset of dementia)

It was once believed that the fully developed human brain was not capable of regenerating itself and was instead hardwired for life.

However, science has proven that theory wrong and has made dramatic inroads into helping repair, rebuild and remodel the brain.

Neuroplasticity, also known as cortical remapping, recognizes the dynamic nature of the brain to learn from prior experience and reshape itself over time. Some scientists even claim it is now possible to gain the brain you have always wanted with some fairly simple exercises.

The "use it or lose it" idea has taken on new meaning as scientists explore the final frontier of the human mind ... the brain itself.

Researchers now believe that training your mind can help you overcome many of the limitations once believed impossible.

The list includes everything from physical impediments resulting from a stroke to increasing the attention spans of those suffering from attention deficit disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Advocates of brain training believe it holds potential to unleash even more, including pain relief, emotional bondage and even character defects, without the use of dangerous drugs or subjective talk therapy.

Wondering if it'll work? Try out a few brain games at [www.sharpbrains.com](http://www.sharpbrains.com)

### Try these Brain Teasers:

- Please [Spot the Differences](#).
- Rid-dle for the Whole Brain: [The Blind Beggar](#).
- Which way is the [bus heading](#)?

*It is a truism that almost any sect, cult, or religion will legislate its creed into law if it acquires the political power to do so...*

- Robert Heinlein

## Tips for Selling Your Home When You Have a Dog

Dogs might be man's best friend, but that doesn't mean it will be easy to stage and show a home with a four-legged gatekeeper on the job. From an overly exuberant personality to downright gruff demeanor, dogs can make it tough to show a home. Following are some ways to minimize distress to Fido and ensure that visitors are safe and that the house remains as appealing as possible.

**Clean It Up:** Because we love our dogs, we don't always see what is in front of our very eyes. Take a good look around. Pick up the dog toys, fill any holes in the backyard, and be sure to dust and vacuum any pet hair before allowing anyone in the home.

**Notify:** Make sure the listing agent includes a note that informs everyone about a dog on the premises and whether there are any special instructions for dealing with visitors. Not only will this prevent a sudden surprise visit that could startle the dog, but it also provides important information to buyers who may suffer from asthma or allergies.

**Schedule:** Whenever possible, ask agents to schedule visits around a time when you can take the dog out for a walk or drive. This allows prospective buyers and the agent to direct attention toward the home and amenities rather than deal with the pet.

**Contingency Plans:** Take special precautions to make sure pets have proper identification. Mistakes happen, and a beloved pet can escape or get loose without anyone realizing it. Leave special instructions on where the pet belongs at all times and what to do in the event of an emergency.

# 7 Easy, Low-Cost Ways to Transform Your Home

Searching for easy ways to spruce up your abode? Following are some ways to transform your home for less than \$10.

**Turn Your TV Into Art:** Newer television sets can easily display family portraits, vacation photos or your favorite scenery with the touch of a button. Just upload to the gallery, add music if desired and enjoy.

**Paint It Up:** Add a splash of color to a boring old chair or bring new life to a table with bold bright colors.

**Sign Your Name:** Decorations don't need to be expensive. Use a template or vinyl letters to showcase your favorite quote. Simply select a blank spot on the wall or furniture to instantly apply a thoughtful expression to your daily life.

**Stop to Smell the Roses:** Bring a little of the outdoors inside with the creative use of flowers, grasses, leaves, pinecones or even rocks. They add interest and color to any décor.

**Cover Up:** Use old wrapping paper, string and ribbons to transform plain cardboard boxes into ultra-colorful organizers.

**Soft Spots:** Create soft spots with the help of a semitransparent scarf draped over a lamp, table or armchair. Use different colors to create ambiance.

**Create Interest:** Repurpose old jewelry, buttons and other knickknacks by adding interest to throw pillows, pull strings or other ordinary items around the home. Sew on or thread together using ribbons and lace.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) for the answer.

In which city were the "Chariots of Fire" Olympic Games held?

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

## Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give my office a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time.

I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Email me anytime at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) to arrange a time to get together or reach me right now at 404-939-1309.

## The Best on the Web This Month

Following are some useful links from the web that are sure to provide you with some interesting information and ways to entertain yourself:

### Whatever You Do, Don't Buy an Airline Ticket on ...

by *Scott McCartney in The Wall Street Journal*

Read the article and sit back comfortably on your next trip, knowing that you've got the best price possible. But just to be on the safe side, don't ask your seatmate what he paid.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/4dtfhq4>

### How the Navy SEALs Increased Passing Rates

by *Bakari Akil II in Psychology Today*

Simple psychology helped Navy SEAL recruits overcome their mental block and it can do the same for you. Skip the mock war game at the start of the article and head straight to the very interesting section on how SEAL wannabes increased their chances of passing the elite unit's training program.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/4a48x6c>

### How to Hone the Accuracy of Your Internal Clock and Better Understand Your Time

by *Jason Fitzpatrick for Lifehacker.com*

Getting a handle on your time can save you plenty of it, and these tips are worth taking the time to read. Don't miss the "Swiss cheese" method of completing big projects using little pockets of time as well as the section on guilt-free relaxation.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/4u88qs4>

# Buying a Short Sale? Why You Need an Agent

Most people realize the necessity of hiring a real estate agent to sell a home, but they take an entirely different approach and opt to go it alone when buying, especially when the property is a short sale.

Before buying a short-sale property, though, people should consider the benefits derived from working with a knowledgeable real estate agent.

Following are some things to think about:

## Advanced Listings

The short-sales market has heated up.

So has the competition.

Get advanced listings sent to your attention as soon as possible by working

with an agent who specializes in short sales.

## Experience Is Key

Buying a short sale is seldom simple, so finding an agent with a track record of success can go a long way toward making sure all the requirements are satisfied.

An agent with experience in short sales will help to expedite your transaction and protect your interests.

## Seek Help

Buying a short sale takes a lot of time, but teaming up with an agent who knows and understands your individual situation dramatically and reduces your risk.

Locating a property and researching it, is the easy part. Dealing with the numerous details and minutia required to close is often a nightmare, and is always frustrating.

Team up with someone who knows the ropes. They will save your sanity.

## Lender Pays

Perhaps the best reason to consider using the services of a real estate agent when purchasing a short sale is the price tag.

After all, the services of an agent are free to the buyer.

The lender traditionally covers the commission in a short sale transaction, making it a win-win situation for all involved.

## The Magic of a Simple Kitchen Timer

The Pomodoro Technique is the latest time management method to make a debut.

Originally envisioned by Francesco Carrillo, the Pomodoro Technique is suitable for both teams and individuals. Implementation is deceptively simple.

Use a kitchen timer to allocate 25-minute periods of intense work followed by a short five-minute break then repeat. Take a long 20-minute break at the end of every four “pomodoros.”

The result is a quick way to enhance focus and concentration while eliminating the anxiety that often surrounds time-sensitive activities.

The Pomodoro Technique is also highly versatile. It can be successfully applied to almost any situation or problem, ranging from mental planning to physical exercise. By breaking each item into small blocks of time it switches the attention away from the “big picture” and allows the user to concentrate on the here and now.

Visit [www.pomodorotechnique.com](http://www.pomodorotechnique.com) for more information, testimonials, certification and training plus other helpful resources.

## Estate Tax Tips for Married Couples

*Market Watch*

Thanks to the generous \$5 million exemption for individuals who pass away in 2011 or 2012, the assets of relatively few people in the United States will be exposed to the federal estate tax over the next few years. To see if you and/or your spouse's estate might bump up against the exemption, try our estate tax calculator and read on for estate-tax-saving tips.

<http://bit.ly/gjcq1h>

## Poll Shows Budget Cuts Dilemma

*Wall Street Journal*

Less than a quarter of Americans support making significant cuts to Social Security or Medicare to tackle the country's mounting deficit, according to a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, illustrating the challenge facing lawmakers who want voter buy-in to alter entitlement programs.

<http://on.wsj.com/euZ9EO>

## Are Those Healthy Snacks Really So Healthy?

Eating healthy isn't always easy. In fact, it now seems that many seemingly healthy snacks might actually do more harm than good. Following are three ways to clean up your snack habits:

**Energy:** Many products are designed to boost energy. Unfortunately, energy can come from a lot of different sources, including caffeine, saturated fats, sugars and vitamins. Select sources that are low in fats, carbohydrates or caffeine.

**Juice:** Juice can pack a lot of sugar. Opt for naturally sweetened options that don't add sugar. Better yet, go for the fresh fruit to increase fibre levels.

**Granola and Grains:** Granola and other grains might seem healthy, but high sugar levels combined with intolerance or allergies to gluten might actually do more harm than good. Try millet or buckwheat.

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

Don  
Zahnle

6	2		4					
		3		5				7
8	1		9		2			6
	7	8						
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1			2		9		8	3
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**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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## Recipe: Lentil Walnut Dip

Serves 4

- 1 cup raw walnuts
- 1 ½ cups cooked lentils
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

### Directions

Place walnuts in a food processor and process until they are finely ground.

Add all remaining ingredients except for oil and process until smooth, scraping down sides of the bowl once or twice.

After the mix is well combined, add the olive oil in a thin stream, with the motor running.

Reserve just a drizzle of the olive oil for topping the spread.

Serve with vegetables or pita chips or as a spread in sandwiches.

