

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

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Playing games for brain health

Playing brain games can go a long way to helping us stay sharp, improve brain health, strengthen memory and slow cognitive decline. They can help us focus our attention, process information more quickly and recall facts. Whether they are logic, word, number, memory, card or any other type of game, playing can give our brains a boost — and we don't even have to leave home!

The AARP Games Center (www.aarp.org/games) is a great place to sample free games. There are various forms of solitaire, mahjong, lots of crossword and word games and trivia. If you're an AARP member and you sign in, there are even more games. Look for the Staying Sharp section for extra games.

Games for the Brain (www.gamesforthebrain.com) is an interesting site that doesn't require any registration. It appears that the games are created by a guy in Germany, but you'll also find familiar games like Chinese checkers and Minesweeper.

As a general rule, look for online games that don't require you to set up an account, where you can just play by going to that website. But if you really want to play the games on a certain site and signing up is required, take a look at their privacy policy to see what information they collect about you. Set up a new email address that you only use for games.

If you prefer to add a social aspect to your game playing, check your local senior center and library for game days where you can play against others. Ask about card games, bingo, chess and checkers, Scrabble or even jigsaw puzzles done as a group.

If money is not a concern, consider a membership at the BrainHQ site (www.brainhq.com). Their games are backed by years of research into improving cognitive function, but be sure to read their privacy policy.

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