USE YOUR BRAIN TO CHANGE YOUR AGE  Dr. Daniel Amen

No matter your age, income, IQ, or education there are dozens of ways to help your neurons grow, stretch and branch into a younger, more beautiful brain every day.

1. **Learn a new language.** Language uses the temporal lobes of the brain and requires that you analyze new sounds, improving auditory processing and memory.

2. **Play Sudoku.** This numbers (not math) game is popular and fun. It can help increase your logic and reasoning skills, as well as memory. Crossword puzzles do the same.

3. **Lose the list.** Using mnemonics (visual imagery or sounds, such as rhyming) can boost your brain while developing a system to remember things. Look for memory courses available on audio or video recordings, often at local libraries or online.

4. **Get in the game.** Games like chess, checkers or Scrabble uses the prefrontal cortex of the brain (forethought). Trivia games can boost memory using the temporal lobes, jigsaw puzzles can help visual and spatial skills and Mah Jong can help executive function (the capacity to control and apply your mental skills).

5. **Online brain training games.** Brain Gym center at www.theamensolution.com can be quite helpful in keeping your brain fit. Spend about 10 minutes a day doing these fun games, and see if you don't find your brain beginning to process better and faster.

6. **Be a Curious George.** Stay curious about life and learning. Read and study or take courses in subjects or the arts or activities that capture your fancy. Be a life-long learner and you're more likely to stay young at heart and in your brain.

7. **It is never too late to learn.** People with fewer academic qualifications may grown old faster, according to a new DNA study. The ones who spent the least time had shorter telomeres or “caps” on the ends of their DNA, a sign of premature aging in cells. Take a college level class, a continuing education course, or anything that engages the brain.

8. **Learn to play a musical instrument** or a different instrument than you normally play.

9. **Try a yoga, Pilates class or meditation.** These disciplines engage the Basal ganglia (modulate anxiety and motivation) region of the brain.

10. **Try a new or old sport or activity.** Dancing, martial arts, golf, softball, ping-pong and more help keep your Cerebellum (coordination) young. Juggling activates the parietal lobes (direction sense and spatial orientation) of the brain. Fun stuff!

11. **Break your routine.** Untether yourself from bad habits that are harming your brain. Change your daily habits and routines to help rewire your brain so you don’t fall back into the same patterns of activity. If you take the same route to work stopping at the same doughnut shop, take a different route and pick up a brain-healthy protein powder-and-fruit smoothie that you can sip along the way instead!