

# Creativity Central

An alliance of experts on innovation and creativity

## Stretch~ercises™

Things to do to excite, stimulate and exercise the brain

"The human mind, once stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimension."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

**Cross Train Your Brain!** The brain is one of the finest computers ever designed. A true super computer. It's speed, ability to sort information and the size of its hard disk are beyond our understanding. Yet we often leave it idling. The stretch~ercises™ are simple exercises designed to take you out of the comfort of your routines, thereby forcing your brain to make new connections which in turn causes neurons to flow. Once stretched you will grow in your capacity and willingness to think and act uncommonly

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- Move your watch, ring, keys, wallet, pager, pen to a new place for a day, week, month.
  - Brainstorm 25 alternate uses for a toothpick, tp roll, newspaper, paper clip, rubber band, etc.
  - Count to 100 by 2s and 3s at the same time; 2/3; 4/6; 6/9, etc or up by 2s and 3s and back by 4s and 5s.
  - Do all the scrabble, jumble, puzzlers in the day's paper.
  - Take a common object (pencil, newspaper, watch, etc.): examine it in detail using all your senses.
  - Focus on your breathing counting from 1 - 10 with each exhale: start over if you lose track.
  - Identify all the geometric shapes that you can see from where you are.
  - Develop lots of uncommon answers to How Come it's raining; traffic is slow; school is out; etc.
  - Improvise curious/playful responses (where appropriate) in answer to questions today.
  - Imagine and develop a conversation between a fishing lure & fish; a bee & flower; a racket & ball.
  - Sit in a new place for meals, meetings, church, temple.
  - Strike up a conversation with someone you don't know or would normally avoid.
  - Take a new or different route today.
  - Intentionally sleep in a new place or position for a few nights. Note what happens upon waking.
  - Use your non dominant hand to eat, brush your teeth, dial phone calls, etc.
  - Listen to and try to appreciate a different style of music or point of view; sample a new food or restaurant.
  - Read the paper (or your favorite section) in a different order.
  - Fast from the news, TV, music, newspaper or reading for a day or a week.
  - Spend today guesstimating measurements and distances or who is calling when the phone rings.
  - Doodle through all your meetings and phone calls.
  - Take a walk or run where you smile at and greet each passerby.
  - Take regular breaks in your day to stretch and move about.
  - Take notes using colored pen or pencils ...and on colored paper.
  - Practice telling what you like about an idea before expressing any concerns you might have.
  - Invent some unimagineable or impossible thing today - just for the Stretch of it!

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"The brain is a beautiful thing. It wakes up with you in the morning and goes to sleep as soon as you go to work."

- Robert Frost