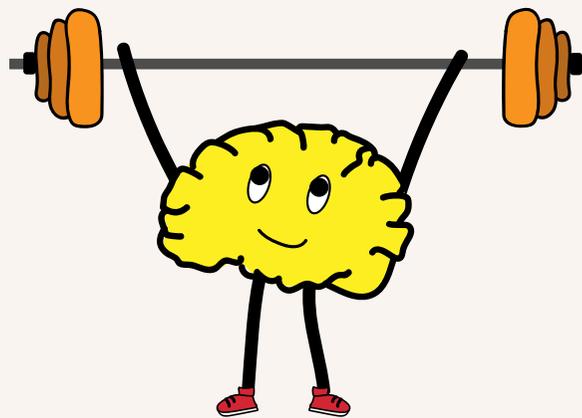


10 Brain Skills

Every busy person
should know



*go***brain***go*

Brain Skills

Task Initiation



Brains that are strong in Task Initiation like to start projects when they show up. This brain likes to see action! This doesn't necessarily mean the task or project will get finished, it means that getting started may come naturally to you.

Completing these things requires other brain skills such as Sustained Attention and Goal-Directed Persistence.

STRONG:

- When a project or task is assigned, you get started on it right away.
- It's not uncommon for you to jump into something without a plan.

WEAK:

- You procrastinate!
- A deadline is the only way to motivate yourself into action.

Sustained Attention



Sustained Attention is about the brain's ability to focus. This is not necessarily difficult when we're doing something we want to be doing... this is really about focus in the face of boredom, repetition, and fatigue. A brain with strong Sustained Attention doesn't rely on a deadline to get things done and can even work with distractions in the room.

Super strong Sustained Attention might also be called hyper-focus which is deep and intense concentration. Can you relate, or is your brain easily distracted?

STRONG:

- Intense concentration means that you are often startled by other people.
- You can maintain focus even when working on the most mundane projects or tasks.

WEAK:

- It can be difficult to follow a long conversation.
- Concentration on certain tasks can be so difficult, it feels like you're herding cats... your brain just can't settle down!

Goal-Directed Persistence



Brains that are strong in Goal-Directed Persistence like to see tasks and projects finished. If the To-Do list has 10 things on it, this brain is going to be compelled to get all 10 done - even if it means staying up until midnight. This brain wants to scratch those items off the list and will happily follow a goal to the end.

STRONG:

- There aren't any half-finished projects in your work or personal life.
- You feel driven to give all your attention to and complete whatever you have signed on to do.

WEAK:

- You often don't follow through on the last 5-10% of a project.
- It's difficult to achieve long-term goals like saving money, finishing post graduate work, or completing big home projects.

Mental Flexibility



Mental Flexibility is about the brain's ability to go with the flow when the plan changes. Can you adapt mentally (and emotionally) to change? Brains with low Mental Flexibility can get "thrown for a loop" when the unexpected happens. These brains can also have a hard time hearing the opinions of others.

Strong mental flexibility can be a real gift because it means you can adapt to change quickly but sometimes these brains are SO flexible, it can be hard to express an opinion. If your brain is very strong in this skill, grow complementary skills like Metacognition and Response Inhibition to support you.

STRONG:

- Working on projects with a lot of "moving parts" that change frequently is easy and fun.
- Your brain can happily hear input from a variety of team members - even if you don't necessarily agree with them.

WEAK:

- You are stubborn!
- Sometimes it's hard to switch from one task to the next.

Working Memory



This skill is all about remembering and using relevant information while you are in the middle of something. Think: driving directions, complex instructions, writing an elaborate email, simple math... If this skill is strong, you may notice that it compensates for some of your weaker skills.

Working Memory declines with age but there are excellent external tools and strategies that can be used to support this skill at any age.

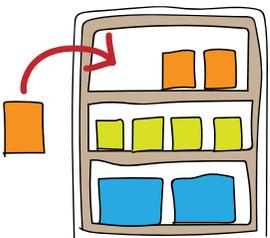
STRONG:

- The daily task list doesn't need to be written down because you remember everything.
- You enjoy a complex discussion because facts, details, and points of view remain top of mind.

WEAK:

- It's not uncommon to walk across the office (or house) to do something and when you get to your destination, have no clue why you are there.
- Using new software programs is stressful because it's hard to retain too many sequential instructions.

Organization



Organization is about the brain's ability to establish and maintain storage systems for physical "stuff", digital files and language (such as our ability to write in an organized way). At its core is the concept that everything needs a home.

When your brain is strong in this skill, you can find things when you need them and your brain inherently knows how to set up organized systems. Some brains are strong in Organization as it relates to "stuff" but weak in Organization as it relates to writing.

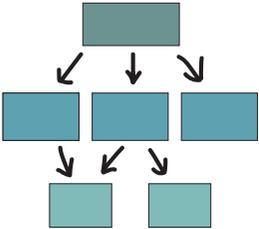
STRONG:

- Your home and work spaces do not have clutter.
- Other people often make positive remarks about your detail-oriented organizational skills.

WEAK:

- Chaos reigns - including in the digital realm.
- It's practically impossible to find something - especially if you're in a hurry.

Planning & Prioritization



Planning and Prioritization is the brain's ability to take a complex project, break it into steps, and determine the priority of each step. Whether the project is physical, on the computer or in your head, a brain with strong Planning and Prioritization loves to jump in and figure out WHAT needs to happen and WHEN.

Brains that are not strong in this skill feel overwhelmed by big projects because there is no clear path ahead.

STRONG:

- It doesn't matter how big a project, ordering the tasks from start to finish is easy and fun!
- This brain is great at strategizing (think: marketing plans, product launches, chess...)

WEAK:

- Big projects often stall halfway through.
- You will avoid working on projects until you absolutely have to.

Time Management



The brain skill of Time Management is about the brain's ability to be aware of time: how long things take, the ability to stay within a timeframe, and an accurate internal awareness of the passage of time.

Brains with a strong Time Management skill know what time it is without looking at a clock. They may not even need an alarm to wake up early. Does this sound like your brain or do you get "lost" in time?

STRONG:

- People know they can rely on you being punctual.
- You are realistic about how long it takes to get things done.

WEAK:

- You hear yourself saying "I don't know where the time went."
- You are often racing across the office (or city) to get to your meetings.

Metacognition



THE THINKER

Metacognition literally means "thinking about my thinking" and is about the brain's ability to be self-aware. Do you reflect on your thoughts, actions, and surroundings or do you charge through life on auto-pilot?

Metacognition is not about choosing one option over another - it's about being aware that there might be more than one option to choose from. The brain's ability to be self-aware is intricately connected to how present we are in the moment.

STRONG:

- You think before you speak.
- The "little things" in life are likely to get noticed.

WEAK:

- Coworkers might not feel "heard".
- You blurt out comments without thinking.

Response Inhibition



Our ability to say "no" to ourselves and follow-through is a valuable skill. A brain that is strong in Response Inhibition is a brain that can control impulses. When the body is well-rested, the ability to control impulses increases. You can tell if your Response Inhibition is low if you find yourself buying, eating or saying things that you later regret.

STRONG:

- You can actually stop eating a bag of chips before it's empty!
- When you know you shouldn't hit "send" on a text reply, you don't!

WEAK:

- You often interrupt.
- It's hard to stop yourself from spur-of-the-moment purchases.