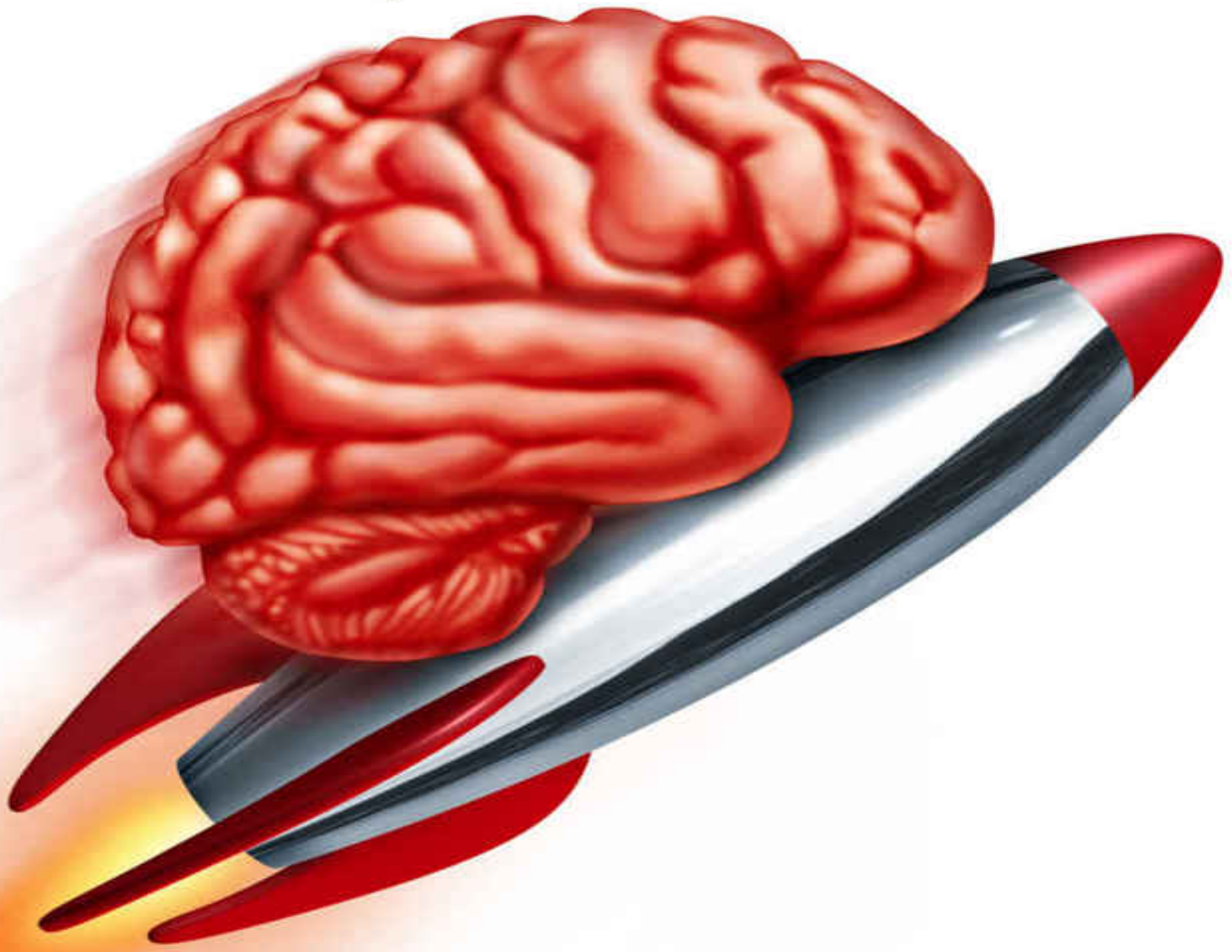


BRAIN TRAINING **POWER BRAIN!**

SECRET TECHNIQUES TO
IMPROVE MEMORY, FOCUS & CONCENTRATION



ROBERT T CAPITAL

POWER BRAIN!

Secret Techniques To Improve Memory, Focus & Concentration

Robert Capital

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: Memory Myths

Chapter 2: Memory Improvement Tips

Chapter 3: Brain Fog

Chapter 4: Tips to Improve Focus

Chapter 5: Unorthodox Brain Exercises

Chapter 6: Effective Learning Skills

Conclusion

Introduction

First of all, thank you for choosing this book, “Brain Training”.

As early as a few decades ago, it was believed that brain function peaked in a person’s early adulthood and then started declining slowly, giving rise to brain fog and memory lapses. Now we know that’s not the case, thanks to the extensive research in the area. But even with that reassurance, we can’t stop cognitive decline.

This is mainly because of our unhealthy lifestyles and our exposure to toxins, combined with a lack of sleep. A poor lifestyle leads to loss of brainpower. And conversely, a healthy lifestyle leads to improvement in brain function.

In this book, let me take you through a myriad of brain training tips and exercises. Using them will help you improve your brain function gradually and stop cognitive decline.

So let’s get started, shall we?

Chapter 1: Memory Myths

So the first thing we're going to talk about is memory. But before we get into how you can improve your memory, let's take a look at some popular myths about human memory. Understanding and busting these myths is important as it will save you valuable time when working on your brain training. It's especially important if you're someone who holds one or more of these myths. You may stop trying quickly if you think that you're forever stuck with a bad memory, but that's not the case.

Your memory can definitely be improved. Myths are only going to harm you and your determination. So let's take bust some common ones before we start. And if you hold one of these, don't be surprised.

Myth #1: There is a secret to a good memory

So many people out there think that there's a secret to improving one's memory and they want to know that secret. But here's the deal – there *is* no secret. There's no one single way to improve your memory.

There are a lot of methods and tools that you can use to improve your memory; each one works differently and improves a different part of your memory. But you can't possibly imagine improving your memory by using just one. To build a house, you need a hammer, a saw, a screwdriver, and whole lot of other tools, don't you? It's the same when it comes to memory improvement.

You have to realize that there's no quick fix or easy way to do this. It requires practice and patience.

In fact, the memory skills are not even secrets. Most of the methods have been around for more than 300 years. One method has been around for 2,000 years. No one has the right to say they "invented" a particular memory skill or that the method is a secret.

Myth #2: Memory is a thing

Nope, it's not. There is no physical part of your brain that's called memory. Memory is far from a thing; it's actually a process. Remembering things is an activity and you shouldn't think of it in terms of bad or good memory.

Remembering something requires you to think about a lot of things, and it may actually be a sum total of different memories. You may have to think about the smell, the sound, and the look of what you're trying to remember at once. Even if two memories are virtually the same, they may be remembered differently. Many times, it's not even a question of complexity. You may remember a whole conversation in detail, but not a simple melody, just because they are stored differently in your memory.

So no, memory is definitely not a thing.

Myth #3: Some people will always have a bad memory

As we've already established, your memory is not a thing. Memory is not even about ability really, so trust me when I tell you that nobody is forever stuck with a bad memory unless they have a health issue.

Some people naturally have a great memory, while others tend to struggle. But that, in no way, implies that they have to continue to do so for the rest of their lives. The memory skills that one picks up are much more important than any natural difference in memory.

Say, you have two boxes, one large and one small, and you put index cards into them. The difference is that in the small box, you put cards in a neat, alphabetical order, whereas in the large box, you just throw them in haphazardly. If you are asked to find a particular box in both the boxes, in which case do you think you'll find the said card faster? The smaller one, obviously.

It's the same with memory. One person may have a bigger box (natural memory), but if the information is not organized and good memory skills are not used, they won't necessarily have an easier time remembering things.

So don't, even for a second, believe that you're forever stuck with a bad memory. It will only stop you from trying, which is the worst thing you can do. You can always improve your memory.

Myth #4: There are easy ways to memorize

This is another myth believed by people who think there's a secret to memorization. There's no "trick", as some people believe, and good memory requires mental effort on your part. It's a learned skill, more often than not, and there is no easy way to do it.

There are memory methods and techniques that you can learn which make the process easier for you, but you still have to put in the effort. Improving your memory is like learning any other thing, like playing guitar, or driving. You wouldn't expect to learn it in a day or two, so why such high expectations when improving your memory?

You have to learn the right techniques and know where to use which ones. That is the only way you'll have a great memory.

Myth #5: Having a photographic memory is common

In movies and TV shows, we often get to see people who possess a photographic memory. They remember things in amazing detail, as if the things they see are etched on their mind. In reality, however, photographic memory is not as common as you might think it is. Very, very few people possess perfect photographic memories. Most people, who perform great feats of memory, when tested, seem to be using a wide array of memory techniques to remember things in great detail.

As we have discussed, anyone can learn memory skills and techniques to boost our memory. So if you see someone with a superb memory, don't worry. They might not have the photographic memory that you suspect they do.

Myth #6: You are too old to improve your memory

Some people often complain that they're too old to improve their memory. They think that just because they're getting old, they cannot learn some memory skills to stay sharp. It's just a myth that needs to be shunned.

Your memory can be improved at any age. Yes, some level of brain function impediment is to be expected at really old ages, but that doesn't mean you can't use memory skills. Even a 70-year-old person who makes good use of memory skills can outperform a 20 year old who doesn't.

Myth #7: A trained memory never forgets

Another myth surrounding memory training is that once a trained person memorizes something, he will never forget it. He will remember the things he sees, hears, and does forever. That's not the case, however, because one can only remember what one wishes to remember.

Learning memory skills will help you remember more things and for a longer period than average people, yes. But you will still be prone to forgetting things eventually. With memory skills, you will dig out the required information easier when required, but at times, it will still be really difficult, and even impossible, to remember things.

Myth #8: Memory is like a muscle and exercising it helps

While repetition may help boost your short-term memory, there is no empirical evidence that it will help your long-term memory at all.

If you spend a couple of hours memorizing something with traditional rote learning methods, you probably won't remember it after a few years. But if you learn the same thing with proper memory techniques, you just might.

Simple rote learning won't solve any of your problems. So instead, you should practice learning memory skills and use them in everyday learning.

Myth #9: Memorizing too much will clutter your mind

People say that if you try to learn too much, you will have a hard time remembering anything! But trust me on this, there is no such thing as too much memorization. Your ability to remember only depends on how well organized the information in your brain is, not how much.

Practically speaking, your brain's storage capacity is "virtually unlimited", as Dr. Higbee puts it. Learning more won't disrupt your ability to remember older things. In fact, learning more sometimes helps you remember older things better. For example, people who're experts in one field find it super easy to digest new facts about the same field, and relate them to the older ones.

So never be shy of learning more. You won't run out of storage space, don't worry.

Myth #10: People only use some 5-10% of their brain power

Let's end this section with a very common myth. You must've heard this one from several people, as it's rampant in pop culture. TV and mass media are partially responsible for propagating this nonsense, too.

Truth is, there's no real research or evidence to support this statement. It's just a myth. Scientists don't even agree on how to measure brainpower and memory.

So if you have been a believer of this, update your database right now. It will do you good.

Chapter 2: Memory Improvement Tips

“There are, then, two kinds of memory: one natural, and the other the product of art. The natural memory is that memory which is embedded in our minds... the artificial memory is that memory which is strengthened by a kind of training and system of discipline.”

-Rhetorica ad Herennium, 90BC

The Romans were well aware of memory systems and how to take advantage of them to train and advance their memories. If you start using them too, you will be surprised how effectively they work.

Most people don't know about these memory techniques and systems, but we have science to back them up now. For example, we now have proof that our brain processes verbal and non-verbal information through different pathways.

We also know how to preserve and improve our brain function throughout our later years, and we can use our greater knowledge of brain health combined with these memory systems to improve our memory a great deal.

Let's look at some of these memory techniques and techniques in this chapter.

The Visualization Technique

You all must have seen a professional memory performer at some point, live or possibly on some Discovery channel show. The things these performers do are just mind blowing, aren't they? They wow us with their seemingly magical abilities to remember a ton of information at once. We're tempted to believe that they have photographic memories, but in most cases, that is untrue. They all usually have average memories, but they use the Visualization and Association technique to enhance their memories to a great extent.

Also known as the visualization technique, it is a fun and powerful memory technique that you can use to remember a lot of information accurately. It's based on the simple premise that human brains remember visual information much more clearly than verbal information. For example, you may not remember all your old phone numbers and addresses, but you will certainly remember all the homes you have lived in. You will recall things in great detail, and that's because it is visual information.

This technique takes advantage of the fact that images are more concrete and easier to remember. You convert all abstract information into easy-to-remember mental images, and use these images as mental hooks of sorts to retrieve the required information whenever you need it. It does wonders for your long-term memory.

This technique works great for another reason: you are focusing more when using it. It's obvious, because when you have to create mental images of a verbal piece of information, you are forced to focus more. You also tend to go over the original material over and over multiple times, and this repetition helps you remember things better.

So here's how the visualization technique works.

Step 1: If what you're trying to memorize has some complex words that can't be easily memorized or visualized on their own, break them down and use substitute words instead. For example, if you're trying to remember that Hobart is the capital of Tasmania, the first thing you must do is break down the words. Break down Hobart into "hobo" and "art".

Step 2: Now you need to visualize the objects that your words talk about. In this case, think about hobos and artworks. Create vivid mental imagery and focus as much as you can. This will help you remember Hobart. Once you've done that, think about the Tasmanian Devil. Remember Taz, that cartoon character from Looney Toons? You can think of him too if that helps.

Step 3: In this step, you need to associate the things you want to remember. Now, you must think of a cap, or maybe even Taz wearing a cap. This way, you will remember that Taz wearing a cap with hobos and artworks means Hobart is the capital of Tasmania.

I admit that it all sounds a little daunting and even time consuming at first, but trust me, it actually *saves* you time! Once you start practicing and getting good at it, you will form connections and associations in no time.

Memory Snapshot

Everyone tries to preserve memories. Some write journal entries to describe events and things in their daily lives, others take photos and make albums, and yet others create video records. Whatever you do, it's because you feel a need to save the memories in some physical form. The problem with that, however, is that you can't carry these physical aids everywhere with you. They're precious, because they're so clear and vivid, but they're not always the most practical. So in this section, we will learn about a technique called Memory Snapshot.

We all have something called the "episodic" memory. It's the memory of events, one that keeps record of various notable events in our lives. It's a type of declarative memory that has been recognized by cognitive neuroscience.

Some of us have really amazing episodic memories. We can recall little details about not-so-significant events without any trouble. It could be a recent business trip, or a vacation from a couple years back, or even a particularly beautiful rainbow seen during childhood. And some others among us have really lousy episodic memory. We hate that we have to struggle to even recall what we had for dinner yesterday.

Well, if you're among the latter, don't despair. There's a good way to fix that. From next time, whenever you want to boost your odds of remembering an event, take a mental snapshot of it. When we don't remember things, it's mostly because we didn't concentrate enough on it to give our time to remember it. That is why we have poorly formed memories. Taking a vivid snapshot in your mind is the secret to improving your episodic memory, and to do that, you must pay attention.

For instance, let's say you're at a wedding. You may think you're observing and soaking in everything around you, but you're not actually doing it unless you're paying attention to the representative bits of it. You have to connect deeply to the situation, and really zoom in on the representative moments to create a great episodic memory.

Let's assume it's your best friend's wedding and you want to remember the couple's vows forever. In such a case, what you will do is focus intently on

the couple and take a mental photograph of the scene.

Follow these steps to take a great snapshot of the memory, and use your eyes as a sort of camera.

- 1) **Gaze intently:** Look at the scene in front of you with utmost concentration, and hold your head steady. It's important for you to remember these details exactly, so tell yourself this firmly. Observe the colors around you, the arrangement and position of things, the dresses worn by people, and the lighting in the room. Try to soak in the smell of the flowers too, if possible. Drink all of it in, as much as you can.

- 2) **Blink your eyes:** Now that you've taken a thorough look at everything around you, it's time to capture the image. Slowly blink your eyes, at almost half the speed you actually blink at. As your eyes close, think of them as a shutter to a camera, and imagine hearing its sound as your eyes shut.

Once you've done all this, review the scene and replay it in your mind's eye. If the images are unclear and fuzzy, try taking another snapshot with greater intensity. Don't give up. Once you get it right, you will find it hard to *forget* the event!

Memory Systems

Memory systems are great to keep information in your brain neatly organized, like in a filing cabinet. Just like it's so much easier to find documents in a filing cabinet simply by looking at the labeled drawers and folders, using memory systems makes finding information in your brain orders of magnitude easier. You can create visual labels for things you store in your memory, and recall them at any time with ease.

Usually, the problem most of us face while trying to remember a piece of information is not that the information isn't in our brains, it's that we have no way of retrieving it. We struggle to find it amidst the chaos of all the other memories. That is why memory systems are so effective. You can greatly boost your ability to remember dates, names, abstract facts, foreign languages, definitions, and much more with the help of memory systems.

Types of Memory Systems

Let's discuss some popular memory systems or methods in this section. Here we go.

Keywords: When you want to memorize definitions or foreign vocabulary, this method is perfect for use. It makes use of a silly or bizarre mental image, associating the meaning of the word to its sound. The image, being bizarre, is quite memorable, and hence, helps us remember the word and its meaning. This method is often used in combination with other memory systems to create powerful mental images and remember complex information.

Links: When you're trying to memorize lists, stories, poems, lyrics, or any other type of reading material, even technical articles, the Link method comes really handy. All you need to do is create memorable mental images linking one item to the next one. So if, say, you're trying to remember the list of things your mom asked you to buy from the grocery store, you take the first two items on the list and link the first one to the second one using a mental image. Then you link the second one to the third, and so on. You can create a huge number of links with this method without feeling overwhelmed. Each link will remind you of the subsequent item in the list.

Peg: This method is used to memorize sequential information. You can use any of several different peg systems, like the Number-Shape system, the Number-Rhyme system, the Concrete Alphabet system, or the Alphabet Sound-Alike system. One remarkable thing about this system, or set of systems, is that you can use the same pegs over and over for different lists. You could use even hundreds of pegs at a time without getting overwhelmed, and remember as many as 6 lists with the same pegs. It's really amazing when used right.

Face-name: You must've seen some memory performers who accurately memorize dozens of names in one go without breaking a sweat. This is the technique that they use for that, and this is how they do it. They take one noticeable feature from the person's face and relate it to the sound of their name. If you see someone named Rick who has really thick eyebrows, you will always be reminded of their name whenever you see them because you relate their name's sound to a feature on their face. If you create vivid, clear labels and mental images, you will hardly ever forget people's names.

Loci or Journey: The method of Loci, also known, as the Mind Palace or the Memory Palace, is a technique that was used by the great Romans some 2,000 years ago. It's one of the most ancient memory systems, and it makes use of routes and places a person already knows to link bits of information. People frequently use the interior of a building, and it's called the Memory Palace. You might have seen Sherlock Holmes use it in the BBC TV series. He goes to his mind palace to retrieve information often.

Phonetic Number: When you need to memorize long numerical values, use this method. It makes use of sound to help you remember long numbers that are hard to remember. You start by replacing each digit in the number with a consonant, and then add a vowel between the consonants. This creates words and phrases, and once you have them down, you can easily create memorable mental images to represent those words and phrases that you've just created. One thing you need to be careful about is that each time you replace the digits with consonants, you must use a standard conversion table.

Chapter 3: Brain Fog

Brain fog, although not a medically recognized term, is often used to describe the feeling of confusion, lack of focus, and forgetfulness. It's like you can't think straight, or think at all really. Your brain feels like a puddle of goo, and you feel frustrated and even frightened at times. This is natural once in a while. Things can go fuzzy for a number of reasons, and there's no reason to be alarmed, but when you start feeling this way frequently, you have reason to be nervous. Everybody wants to stay mentally clear all the time.

Brain fog gets the best of us. If you lead a busy life, every once in a while, you may feel a lack of concentration, mental fatigue taking over, or a strange memory lapse. You may even feel like a cloud is taking over your mind, leaving your brain foggy. It's natural, and is usually caused by stress and lack of proper sleep.

In any case, however, let's take a look at some other possibilities:

- Sometimes, a temporary brain fog can be caused by low blood sugar, food allergies, dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, and heavy exercise.
- Seasonal allergies can also cause temporary brain fog.
- Women who go through menopause can also experience episodes of brain fog. In fact, it's a common symptom of menopause.
- Some drugs can also cause memory loss and brain fog, so make sure you don't take medication without proper prescription.
- Patients of cancer who're going through chemotherapy are also known to go through episodes of brain fog. It is referred to as chemo fog in their case. This is a well-known side effect.
- Another extremely common cause of brain fog is substance abuse. Any kind of substance abuse can leave you feeling mentally drained.
- While brain fog isn't an unavoidable fate for old people, it isn't rare for people of age to lose mental clarity, as they grow older. Of course, it doesn't always have to be this way.
- More serious conditions like depression, hormonal imbalance, mercury poisoning, fibromyalgia, thyroid problems and Lyme

disease can also cause brain fog.

If you eat healthy, exercise regularly, and take proper sleep, you should be fine. Occasional brain fog is nothing to worry about.

What about nutritional supplements?

Sometimes, even if you're following a healthy lifestyle, you can suffer from brain fog. You try meditation and a change of diet, but the brain fog just keeps coming back.

In this case, you might be suffering from a nutritional deficiency. Yes, it's not a thing of the past. People suffer from nutritional deficiencies to this day, and it's common. Our diets are not very balanced most of the times. So you can look at some nutritional supplements to help you clear the brain fog and get back on track again.

Consider the supplements mentioned below.

Vitamin B12

This one's the usual suspect. So many people suffer from a deficiency of Vitamin B12 without even realizing it, and this is what messes up their brain function. If you're also in a constant state of brain fog and keep forgetting things, consider this deficiency. It is estimated that in the US alone, almost 40% of the adults are deficient in Vitamin B12.

This is a serious deficiency and shouldn't be taken lightly by anyone. Ignoring it can lead to a vast array of problems. Avoid mental disorders and keep your Vitamin B12 consumption levels healthy. If they're not, look for some quality supplements on Amazon. You'll get good deals there.

Vitamin B12 is only found in animal products, so vegetarians tend to suffer from its deficiency more often. Old people also suffer from it more commonly because they have poor absorption.

Methylcobalamin and Adenosylcobalamin are the best-absorbed forms of Vitamin B12.

Vitamin D

You've read about Vitamin D and its benefits in your secondary school science class probably. But just in case you haven't, let me tell you how useful it is. It can lift your mood, tackle depression, improve memory, avoid skin problems, and even improve one's problem-solving abilities. Vitamin D is also known as the sunshine vitamin because sunlight is a natural source of it.

Vitamin D deficiency is also very common, more common than you may think. Worldwide, over a billion people suffer from it, and even in the United States, over 40% of the population suffers from it.

You should go out and get some natural sunlight as often as possible, and if you can't do that for some reason, then you should take supplements. Vitamin D is rarely found in food.

Multivitamins

Multivitamins are very useful, and they're not just for old and sick people. Multivitamins can actually boost your brain function. Numerous scientific studies have proven that taking a multivitamin a day can improve one's memory and brain function. It's recommended by the Harvard School of Public Health for all adults. It acts as an insurance to fill any gaps in a person's diet.

Omega-3 EFAs

Your brain has high concentrations of Omega-3 essential fatty acids. The "essential" in their names isn't just for show. They are actually really important for the overall health and functioning of our brains, and they are also crucial for a healthy memory. Sadly, Omega-3 EFAs are really lacking in our diets.

Wild-caught salmon is a great dietary source of Omega-3 EFAs, but it's not a part of most people's diets, so it's better to take supplements. It's even more important for someone with brain fog. When you pick out an Omega-3 EFA supplement, make sure it has high concentration of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

Brain Boosting Supplements

The above-mentioned supplements should do the trick in most cases. If you're one of the select few who just can't get rid of their brain fog even after taking these supplements regularly, it's time to try something different.

There are some supplements specifically designed to improve brain function. OptiMind is one such supplement. It boosts thinking power, energy, mood, and productivity in a person. A number of similar supplements are available in the market right now. Consult a doctor and take the right supplement.

So what's the bottom line?

Any sort of fuzziness, confusion, or lack of concentration is referred to as brain fog. It can be caused by a wide variety of reasons, including a lack of healthy lifestyle.

So if you want to avoid brain fog, make sure your diet consists mainly of unprocessed foods, you get adequate sleep, you don't take unnecessary stress, and you take the necessary nutritional supplements.

Chapter 4: Tips to Improve Focus

Wherever you go in life and whatever you choose to pursue, your focus will decide your success. Focus is one of the hardest things to achieve. Our minds are like wild horses, as the Bhagavad Geeta says. They always want to go in ten different directions, and unless there's a charioteer to rein them in, they will go off to do whatever they want to. It's the same with our senses. We need to rein them in and take control, or else they will take us places we don't really want to go.

Let's take a look at some tips to improve focus in this chapter.

1. Practice meditation.

I can almost hear you go “duh!” at this moment, but I had to mention this. Meditation is the go-to way to improve focus, and it’s so important.

Ideally, you should take out some time for meditation and use it exclusively for meditating. But most of us cannot do that. Well, the great thing about meditation is that you don’t *have* to allocate time to it. You can practice it any time you want. Start by taking deep breaths and focusing on the air entering and leaving your lungs. Focus on the air and feel the way it touches your upper lips and nostrils; feel it touching the back of your throat and feel your lungs inflate and deflate. Do nothing else but just focus on this motion for a while. Don’t try to go thoughtless in the beginning. You won’t succeed in all probability. At this time, there’s usually an endless and absurd chain of thoughts that your mind goes through. It becomes slightly restless and starts wandering off, but you don’t have to try too hard to hold it back. Just nudge it whenever it tries to drift away and bring it back to focusing on your breathing. This will calm down your circulatory systems, and you will also feel a sense of peace and calm. You can do this anywhere and at any time; literally all you have to do is breathe. The next time you go out on a commute, wait for your code to compile, or wait in a line, try this.

2. Listen to music.

When I say listen to music, I mean you really have to listen to music. It's something that you need to be focusing on, something that you're doing as a primary activity. If you're exercising or working on something else while listening to music without paying any attention to it, it won't do you any good. Listen to good music and focus on it.

Most people feel its power when they first start playing some instrument. That's what happened to me, too. When I started playing the guitar, I started paying more attention to the music I listened to, and with time, I could listen to each instrument's individual notes. I could hear the base lines, the rhythms, the lead solos all being played in sync. This opened up my ears and my brain to a lot of new things. I started enjoying a lot of new music that I never listened to before, and I could also focus on a single instrument at a time and tell what exactly was happening at a particular moment.

Listening to music is another form of meditation. You clear your mind off of everything else and just focus on the music. There's no clutter in your brain and all you can hear is the song. It adds a whole new dimension to the way you approach music.

3. Work when you are most comfortable.

Not all of us feel most productive or comfortable at the same time of the day. Some of us work better during the day, while others feel more comfortable working during the night. While you should certainly get good sleep during the night, it's okay to prefer working during late hours. Find the time you feel most productive, and then utilize that time doing what you consider most important to you.

4. Divide your goals into smaller chunks that can be readily achieved.

While having an end goal in mind is great, it's not enough to keep you motivated. We often find the initial drive to do things but soon start losing focus and get frustrated with what we are doing. This is because our goals start seeming too big and unachievable. We don't see immediate results, and it makes us question our progress. It's very demotivating. A great way to counter it and stay focused is to break down our goals into smaller targets that are more readily achievable. Set tight (but realistic) deadlines for yourself, and then check off items from your list of things to do. You will feel accomplished and powerful.

5. Start fasting a bit.

Heavy food tends to slow us down and makes us feel lazy. We've all felt it at some point of time, haven't we? After a solid meal in the afternoon, we feel like laying down for a nap sometimes. It's because the brain directs the blood supply towards the stomach to speed up the digestive process, thus making us feel sleepy.

Intermittent fasting can help you combat this. It has a lot of other benefits too, when done in moderation. When you do a bit of fasting, your metabolism tends to speed up and you stay more alert; you also stay in shape. Just try not to starve yourself, okay? Death can be kind of counter-productive to what we're doing here.

6. Practice delayed gratification.

People who can delay gratification have a higher chance of succeeding in what they set out to do. There have been countless examples of this, and it will continue to be the case. There was even a TED talk on this topic. People tend to focus on the bigger picture when they're not distracted by the greed of immediate gratification. They keep the bigger goal in mind and don't get distracted by little things. You should also practice delaying gratification in your day-to-day life. With time, you'll find it easier to say no to that last donut, to not have fries with that, to throw away that last cigarette, to say no to that extra cheese, stuff like that you know. You will have more of "Yes" in your life and more time to do the right things.

7. Force yourself a bit; don't force yourself too much.

There are times when you should be working and times when you shouldn't be. The former is when you're feeling kinda lazy and need some extra push to get started. It's okay to push yourself a little and get in the flow. We all need some extra motivation at times. However, at times, we feel too mentally absent to do anything. We hit a wall and our brain refuses to do anything, no matter how hard we try. It's times like these when you should let go and stop forcing yourself to work. You won't achieve anything or do anything productive even if you work during this time, so it's better not to. Go do something else during this time, ideally something completely different from what you were originally supposed to be doing. Blow off some steam and then come back to the original task.

8. Wear light clothes whenever you can.

Have you seen any sadhus (hermits) practice meditation? They all are wearing such light clothes. That's because having good ventilation is healthy. Whenever you can, wear light clothes.

9. Sit with Mother Nature every once in a while.

Try and go out to be with the nature whenever you can. It can be as simple as going to the park. Just lie down and listen to the birds singing, the twigs cracking, and the wind swooshing through the tree branches. Maybe go by a riverbank and hear it babble over the stones, or go to the beach and listen to the waves crashing on the shore. All you have to do is sit and pay attention. Let yourself immerse in the beauty of nature, and it will calm you down greatly. You will be able to focus much more when you want to.

10. Give yourself some buffer time.

When you finish a piece of work, give yourself some time to breathe. Lay back for a couple of minutes and let yourself unwind. Breathe deeply and feel the stress in your body disappear. It prepares you for the next task and prevents fatigue.

11. Some things just take a minute. Don't procrastinate them.

We feel really tempted to put off the things that are really tiny and insignificant for later. We tell ourselves that there's plenty of time to do them and that we can easily do them later. It's only when they pile up and start stressing us out that we think about them again. Before these things start burdening your mind, finish them without any delay.

12. Exercise your mind daily.

Get your creative juices flowing by engaging in some passionate discussion with others and building things you like. Solve some puzzles and do that Sudoku if you need to; just don't sit idle. And no, meditation is not keeping your mind idle, just an FYI.

13. Exercise your body daily.

Take some time out of your daily schedule to exercise your body. You don't have to be really hardcore and become the next Ronnie Coleman. Just remember to treat your body well and stay in shape. Your body should never be a liability to you.

Chapter 5: Unorthodox Brain Exercises

To make the best of your brainpower, you have to give your brain new experiences. It's how your brain develops and produces natural brain nutrients that help memory. In this chapter, we shall look at some unconventional exercises for you to try. They will help you combine physical senses with the emotional "sense", and make your brain cells stronger and more resilient. Try these when you're down or during your morning routine. They work like cross-training for the brain, and you will definitely feel the difference.

1. Shower with your eyes closed

This exercise is meant to enhance your other sense by not using one sense, the sight. When you're unable to see things around yourself, your brain will be forced to use other senses to feel things around you. You will notice textures and shapes around you and relate them to objects in a way you might not have done previously. Try and locate the taps just by feeling them out and not using your sight. Adjust the temperature and then take a bath with your eyes closed.

2. Brush teeth with your non-dominant hand

Almost every person relies on their dominant hand to perform most tasks that involve using hands. The dominant hand has more strength, more dexterity, more agility, more everything, so using it exclusively for so many things makes sense. But in doing this, we tend to limit our brain function sometimes. But when you use your non-dominant hand, you trigger the expansion of parts of cortex. This expansion is rapid and substantial, giving your brainpower a boost. So try brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand every now and then. Heck, try doing other normal stuff with your non-dominant hand. Peel a banana or an orange, use your computer's mouse, pour your coffee into the cup, or anything else you can think of.

3. Switch around your morning activities

When you try a new activity, your brain activity increases in certain areas, and studies show that these tasks affect large regions in the cortex. When things become routine and mechanical, the brain activity tends to decline. We start taking things for granted and don't pay enough attention to the activities we're doing. To change this, you should not fall into a rut and keep things fresh. If you get dressed before breakfast usually, try doing it after at times. If you walk your dog on a particular route daily, try changing it every few days. Browse through new TV channels and watch programs you've never watched before. The point is to give your brain something new to do and think about.

4. Turn familiar objects upside down. Literally.

Here's another fun exercise. You must definitely be wondering how this one helps because it sounds completely silly, right? Well, it so happens that our brain is very quick to label things when we see them, right-side up. It instantly tells you the name of the object and moves on, diverting your attention elsewhere. This doesn't happen when the object is upside down. In that case, your brain carefully processes the colors, shapes, and relationships of the puzzling picture before it. So take everyday objects whenever you're free and flip them over to see how they look like upside-down.

5. Switch seats at the table

We usually have predetermined seats on the table when we sit together with the family to have a meal. Everyone has their own favorite spot, and that's the way it tends to stay for long periods in most families. You should change this and switch seats with someone on the table. It gives you a new perspective on things in the room. You see people from different angles, and even the way you reach for things on the table changes. It's a refreshing exercise.

6. Read differently

Silent reading uses completely different brain circuits than when you're reading aloud. So in this exercise, I want you to read in a way different from your usual method. You can do this with a partner, where you both take turns to be the reader and the listener. It's also a great way to spend quality time together.

7. Eat unfamiliar foods

This exercise makes use of your olfactory senses. You see, whenever you eat something, a different combination of receptors is activated in your nose to distinguish the odor from others. It tells your brain what you're eating. That's why you can't taste things properly when you catch a cold.

Studies have shown that the olfactory receptors have a direct link to the emotion centers of the brain. This can trigger unexpected feelings in a person when he smells something different. In this exercise, you will need to try an unfamiliar cuisine. Browse through different seasonings, vegetables and packed goods to get a feel for the cuisine. You can also ask the storekeeper to teach you how to make some other items that are more unfamiliar.

8. Make a new connection with your nose

We learn to associate various odors to different events or experiences in our lives. An example of that is your morning coffee. You won't remember when your brain started associating the smell of coffee with mornings, but that's how it is. This exercise helps you develop new habits by associating them with an odor. Take an extract of any odor you like, say citrus, and keep it near your bed. As a week or two pass by, you'll start to relate it to mornings. You'll inhale it when you wake up every day, and this will create new neural pathways.

9. Open the car window

When going out in your car, open the window and try to recognize all new sounds and smells on the way. Your hippocampus processes memories in the brain, and it's really good at creating mental maps with sounds, odors, and sights. This exercise will provide the hippocampus with more raw materials to create mental maps.

10. Play with spare change

When you use your sense of touch to identify and differentiate between objects, the cortical areas in your brain are activated. These areas process tactile data and this leads to stronger synapses. This is because our brains usually rely on visual information to distinguish between things. This exercise also gives you a feel for how blind people read Braille letters. Their brains simply devote more neural pathways for processing fine touch.

Here's what you need to do. Take a cup and fill it with coins. Place this cup in your car's drink holder and whenever you stop at a spotlight, take a coin out of the cup and try to identify it by just feeling it. You can do the same exercise by carrying coins in your pocket wherever you go.

11. Scan at the supermarket

The sole purpose of this exercise is to break out of a rut and experience something new. You see, shopping at a supermarket is a very calculated experience. Things that the store profits at the most are usually placed at the eye level, so you don't see everything when you're shopping. In this exercise, all you have to do is look at the various shelves in the supermarket thoroughly and pick up any unfamiliar items. The item doesn't have to be something you're going to buy. The point is to break out of the routine, so just read the ingredients or anything else when you pick it up, and then put it back.

12. Do an art project in a group

Art is related to emotion, it's an outlet for emotion. You must have heard of this, right? It's true, because the emotional and nonverbal parts of the cerebral cortex are affected by art. A logical line of thinking with linear ideas is executed very differently by the brain that art. When you're creating art, you draw information from parts of your brain that are interested in colors and forms, even textures. So in this exercise, I want you to create a group of people and ask each person to draw things. They can be associated with seasons, emotions, or even a current event.

13. Play “10 Things”

This is a game that children play sometimes. It's actually a great way to force your brain into thinking new ideas, which keeps it strong. For this exercise, all you need is a few people and some ordinary objects. When someone gives you an object, you have to list down 10 possible things that this object could be. For example, if you get a fly swatter, you might think of it as a tennis racket, a baseball bat, a shovel, a violin, and much more.

14. Make more social connections during your day

Social deprivation can prove to be very harmful for your cognitive abilities, and this has been proven by scientific research repeatedly. In this brain exercise, all you need to do is interact with more people than you do normally. Buy a drink from a person instead of buying it from a vending machine. Pay the clerk at the gas station instead of swiping your credit card at the pump. These little interactions can keep your brain healthy.

Chapter 6: Effective Learning Skills

In this chapter, we will take a look at some proven skills to improve your learning experience. Using them, you will consistently maximize your retention and your understanding of the subject matter.

Skill #1: Reduce Interference

Interference is one cause of forgetting things. Whenever some previously learned information interferes with what you're trying to learn at a time, it's called interference. It causes confusion, and you end up mixing information from both the sources.

Here are some strategies to counter interference.

Overlearning

You are much less likely to mess up the information in your head if you know the material from at least one of the sources well. Continue studying past the point where you can barely recall information and you'll step into the realm of overlearning.

If you're learning a speech, don't just recite it to yourself once. Read it over and over until you can flawlessly recite it without breaking a sweat. That's when you know you've achieved mastery. This considerably reduces interference from other sources.

Avoid studying similar subjects together

If you try to study similar subjects without any intervals, your brain will muddle up information more often. So avoid studying similar subjects together or in close succession. For example, if you have to study geometry, organic chemistry and biochemistry over the next couple of days, space out organic chemistry and biochemistry and study geometry in between. It will avoid possible interferences.

Different rooms for different subjects

If you study different subjects of similar nature in different rooms, it will greatly reduce chances of interference. This is a proven method and works great when you need to understand and remember the different contexts for different subjects. A similar trick is using different colored inks for both subjects. These are just ways to create distinctions between the two subjects as they help the brain associate different elements to these two subjects. Recalling information becomes easier this way because the brain has different hooks for them both.

Bonus: If you're using an image-based memory technique as we discussed in a previous chapter, try and create different mental rooms for both subjects. Include a subject anchor in your images that you can associate to the subjects. For example, if you're learning Spanish and French, start your French mind palace with the Eiffel Tower and your Spanish mind palace with a sombrero.

Skill #2: Use a Study System

While learning something, using a study system is possibly the best thing you can do. Study systems are standard methods of approaching study material, and they greatly boost your performance. There are a number of study systems that have been created over the years, but SQ3R is one of the oldest and most-respected systems out there.

SQ3R is actually an acronym. It includes the steps involved in the system: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. Let's see how you can perform each step:

Survey

When surveying, your aim is to understand the framework of the study material without going too deep into the details. Read the main parts of the text to have an idea of the structure of the information. Create a mental outline without digging too deep. Reading the table of contents, the preface, and chapter summaries is generally a great idea. Go over headlines and captions, and don't skip the photos. Just skip any actual study material.

Question

Ask yourself questions about each part of the text once you're done surveying it. The questions can be specific or broad, but they should be about the topics you just glazed over. The aim is to keep yourself engaged and interested in the material. You will be thinking deeply about what's to come even before you have actually studied it, which is great for your learning experience.

Read

This is the section most average people start at. They jump into the main material from the get go. But it's important for you to remember that unless you perform the first two steps, you won't make the best out of this step. Surveying and asking questions ensures that the information you're taking in your brain is stored in an orderly manner.

During your first pass, save time and browse through it quickly. Don't take any notes and make sure you use speed-reading techniques. You'll increase your comprehension in the long run.

Don't underline or highlight any text during the first pass either. You have no idea what's important, so discuss it with your peers first.

Recite

Once you've read the text, go through it again and read each heading. Ask questions based on those headings and subheadings, and then answer them yourselves without looking at the book. If you want to remember specific facts, recite them out loud. It improves your memory.

Review

This is the last step and should take you just minutes. Recite your way through the material again, and space out your review sessions. Reviewing the material multiple times ensures it will stay in your memory, so always remember to review before closing the book.

Skill #3: Space It Out

It's important to space out your studying when you're studying a specific subject. It is much more beneficial to finish a chapter in three 1-hour sessions than in one 3-hour session. You might just get away with cramming and do okay in the test next day, but you won't really have learned something unless you space out your learning.

Your attention span is limited and it's difficult to focus on anything for too long. As your study session extends longer, your concentration levels sink with each passing minute. This leads to poor recollection.

Instead, if you take breaks between study sessions, your brain will have time to rest and parse the information recently stored. It will strengthen your memory during the breaks.

You should be careful, however, on how you structure and space out your study sessions. Three 50-minute sessions with breaks of 10 minutes sounds good, but six 25-minute sessions with breaks of 10 minutes sounds completely impractical and ineffective. Time your sessions wisely, using shorter sessions for harder subjects and longer ones for subjects you find relatively easy.

Conclusion

With this, I conclude this book. We have covered a lot of different topics in this book. We have busted some popular memory myths and learned how to improve our memory by using different memory techniques. We have also learned what brain fog is and how we can combat it by following a healthy lifestyle. We have learned about some pretty unconventional exercises and tips for improving brain function. All of this will help you slow down cognitive decline and make the most out of your brain's potential. Remember to keep practicing because this is a slow process and it takes time to master some of the systems mentioned here. Do further research and never give up.

Thank you for reading this book!

Preview of *Chakras: Your Shortcut to Happiness!*

Facts About the Major Chakras

You have been told in the previous chapter that there are seven chakras in your body and every chakra is also associated with a certain organ in your body that is extremely vital for your existence. This chapter gives you certain facts that will help you understand your chakras better than before.

Root Chakra

The root chakra is also called the muladhara chakra that is located at the base of your spine and is the primitive chakra. The environment, your body and the earth have a lovely bond that has been formed due to the root chakra which is the root to your very being. It also helps in keeping you grounded to the earth. You will find that the chakra helps in playing an extremely significant role in keeping you alive!

The chakra helps in keeping you alive since the chakra helps you in deciding whether or not you need to fight or flee if you were in a dangerous situation. The chakra is associated with an aspect that is ancient and is fundamental and also acts as the center of attention to represent animal behavior. This chakra works wonders when you are in a difficult or a tiring time. You will find that this chakra provides you with courage and also the will to survive these difficult times.

The energy that is in this chakra has been transferred from one generation to the next. This energy has been transferred from your ancestors based on the experiences they have had during their lifetime. The root chakra is the base for every chakra and is extremely important for the existence and the balance of every other chakra. It contains every memory that each one of your ancestors may have had with respect to challenges, combats, starvation or any natural disasters. There are certain memories that have been gathered during these experiences that have been stored in the root chakra. These memories get attached to your body in a way they never would have had this chakra not existed. The memories help in creating a bond and a pattern with your ancestors. When you are on your path to uncovering your hidden self, you will be making changes to your life.

You have to remember that every chakra in the body is connected to each other. If there is a change in one chakra, there will definitely be a change in the other chakras. It is essential that you learn how to balance your chakras in order to function on a regular basis. The important thing to remember is that your root chakra is important to ensure that you grow and transform!

Sacral Chakra

The sacral chakra, also called the Svadhisthana, is the chakra that is right after the root chakra. It is the base and the essence of pleasure and passion. This chakra is found in your pelvic areas and is like the command center for every ounce of pleasure you may feel during your lifetime. This chakra, unlike the root chakra, helps you enjoy yourself more and will help you when you are looking for ways to find pleasure. Any feeling or emotion you may be feeling is governed by the sacral chakra. If you are looking at forming a bond with your emotions, sensuality or even intimacy, you will need to balance the energy in this chakra.

The sacral chakra generates energy that will help in letting your emotions loose and also helps in making any changes to your body when you are trying to make a move. The main challenge you would face when there is an imbalance in the energy in the chakras is that you will have opinions that would disappoint the society. You will find it difficult to stick to the norm even when the chakra is balanced, but it is worse when the chakra is imbalanced. The society does not value adjectives and words that describe passion, emotion or feeling. You and every other human being has been trained right from birth that you should never disrupt the rules that have been stated in the society and will always need to be in control. This will always create a lasting impact on your behavior and will make you feel disconnected from your body.

There are certain topics in the society that have been stated as those which can never be discussed in public although it is claimed that this is a modern society. This is because hypocrisy is becoming one of the most popular qualities of the people in the society. This leaves every person with a negative impact and also creates an aversion towards sexuality. It is because of all these issues that people have had a lot of problems with pleasure and enjoyment in their lives. The chakra also helps in enhancing your creativity and will also help you in developing an interest in various forms of art. This is because of the fact that all the emotions have been generated in the sacral chakra. The energy that is found in this chakra is extremely important since it leaves you passionate and sensual. It will also help you in becoming extremely creative!

Solar plexus Chakra

The solar plexus chakra, also called the Manipuri chakra is the third chakra. It is found in between the solar plexus and your navel. Your personality traits identify and ego are often influenced by the energies in this chakra. This is a chakra that helps you identify and understand a perspective of yourself. The energy in this chakra always controls your self – esteem, self – discipline and your will power. When this chakra is balanced well with the energy and is vibrant you will find yourself feeling confident, responsible and more reliable. If there is any dormant energy that is in this chakra, you will find that it has been transformed into action and in movement! You will find that the solar plexus chakra always works towards providing your body with the zeal and the energy to move ahead. The only problem you may face is to be unable to understand how you can use this energy.

The energy that is in this chakra and has been generated in this chakra is extremely strong and is inconsistent. Every individual will react differently to the energy that has been generated in this chakra. You will find that you are stressed out which would leave you with high levels of stress. If the energy in the chakra is blocked, you will find yourself extremely inactive and passive. For a person whose solar plexus is balanced, you will find them with great levels of confidence. These people will always be able to achieve everything they want to in life and will always have the ability to make the right decisions. If there is an imbalance in the chakra, you will need to identify the right ways to ensure that you improve yourself.

The solar plexus chakra helps in providing you with the ability to make the right decisions and will also help you to choose the right path. The chakra will help you in enhancing your self – esteem. But, when you do something negative, you will find your solar plexus chakra also being affected negatively. You will be able to balance the chakra well if you begin to appreciate yourself.

Heart Chakra

The heart chakra, also called the Anahata is the fourth chakra that is found in your body. This chakra is located near your heart and is closely attached with comfort, love, warmth and compassion. This chakra is always responsible for any feelings you may have with respect to love and friendship. It also helps you with creating and maintaining the bonds you form with other individuals. You will also be able to manage emotions like affection, respect, compassion, empathy, apathy and generosity. This chakra plays a major role in helping you maintaining relationships. The color green represents this color making it the color of love. This is the color that has the power to help any person become better. You will find that the chakra helps in providing you with a holistic way to approach and live your life. You will find that your life is larger than you alone! You will be able to develop the ability to love and will also be able to provide yourself with support to maintain a healthy relationship with people you love. When the energy in this chakra is balanced, you will be able to become more sociable and will also be able to understand relationships better. Make sure that you work well towards keeping the energy in this chakra balanced.

Throat Chakra

The fifth chakra or the throat chakra is the starting point of every chakra in the body. It is also called the Vishuddha chakra and is found near your neck. It expands towards your shoulders and all across your neck to be very precise. The color associated with this chakra is blue and this is the center for every ounce of creativity that is in your body.

The energy that is generated in this chakra manifests itself into certain talents that are in you. You will be able to connect with your inner self and will also be able to find a connection with the Cosmos or the divine self.

Blue always represents a color that is free of any hindrances and is extremely pure. The path that you can travel on in order to adopt hope and faith is always guided by this color. There are other colors you have found in the chakras above that will have a different impact on your body. When the throat chakra is full of energy and is balanced well, you will find yourself having numerous positive impacts. You will find yourself feeling calm and composed and will also be able to be at peace with yourself and every other entity around you. If the energy in the chakra is weak or imbalanced, you will become nervous and irritable. You may become an introvert and a poor listener.

The insights to your creativity are always responsible to provide you with the zeal and the drive to create something new and this is provided by this chakra. You will find that it gets difficult to create something out of nothing, but when this chakra is balanced, you will be able to make a conscious decision. You will need to work on the creativity that is inside your body and use that to help you with the process of making something new. It is always good to use your talents to your benefit.

Third Eye Chakra

This is the sixth chakra out of the seven major chakras that you have in your body. This chakra is also called the ajna chakra and is found right between your eyebrows and right above your nose. This chakra provides you with the knowledge to be able to transcend between the boundaries of the mortal world that would help you connect with the cosmos. This implies that you and every other individual will always be able to see both the mortal world and the outer world.

This chakra is often associated with indigo, which is also referred to as royal blue. The chakra represents a vast amount of wisdom, knowledge and the awareness of a person's inner self. The color is a very dark shade of blue and is always associated with night and helps in unlocking the door that helps you approach the realm of divinity. The energies in the other chakras can be combined with the third eye chakra in order to attain greater levels of divinity and spirituality. This is something you will need to do with caution. This is because of the fact that you have to always ensure that you maintain a connection with the world while trying to attain a greater level of wisdom.

If you are someone who is getting extremely involved with the other dimensions, you will not be of any use since you will find yourself getting too detached from everyone or everything you may hold extremely dear to you. Just like every other chakra, you will find that you an imbalance in this chakra would affect you extremely badly. If there is any negative energy in your chakra, you will find yourself listening to voices or even having nightmares. You will become impulsive and may even become very obsessed or delusional. When the energy in this chakra has been balanced well, you will find yourself peaceful, intuitive and perceptive. You will begin to make the right decisions with a clear mind and will also be able to maintain positive traits for the rest of your life.

Crown Chakra

This is the last chakra in your body and is one of the most important chakras of all! The crown chakra is also called the Sahara chakra and is located at the crown area of an individual. The color associated with this chakra is violet and the energies in the chakra would help an individual experience life to the fullest. They will be able to identify the best things about their life without any external help and will also be able to understand the happiness gained from the tiniest things that happen in life.

When the person understands this, they will have the ability to be at peace with themselves and with the people around them. The energy that is found in this chakra will help in acting as the unifying force that will help you in understanding the association you may have with the Cosmos. Every question that you may have ever had about your life or destiny can be answered with the energy that is in the chakra. There are certain things that may have bothered you initially will begin to seem extremely petty. You will find that it is easy to let go of these issues and understand what the meaning of your life is.

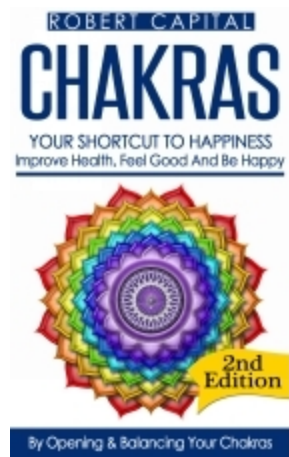
The information given in this chapter covers the seven major chakras that are all found in the body. You have also been told about how these chakras have been associated with the different organs in your body. The chakras are all very important and if you find that one chakra is imbalanced, every other chakra will follow. It is extremely important that you do not give one chakra more importance when compared to any other chakra. The chakras are all associated with a color in the rainbow. The chakras have to always be in complete harmony with each other. If there is absolutely no harmony between the chakras, you will notice the trouble starting. In the latter chapters, you will learn more about the different processes you will need to use in order to balance the energies in the chakras.

It is extremely important to be patient. You have to read through every chapter carefully and understand every minute detail that has been mentioned throughout the book. You will need to ensure that you just do not acquire the knowledge but will also have to understand the depth of the words that have been used in the book. That will be the only way you will be able to attain a certain level of equilibrium.

Discover different easy techniques to open and balance your chakras today!

[Click here to learn more about the book *Chakras: Your Shortcut To Happiness*.](#)

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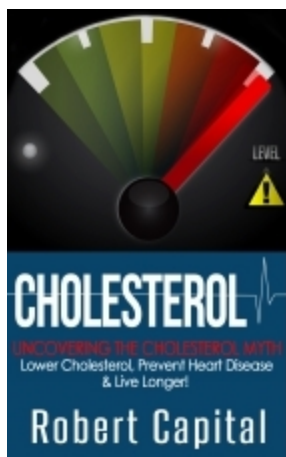
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