

# Tricks to Activate Both Sides of Brain

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*Though one side of your brain is dominant, a few tricks can activate both hemispheres so you can be both creative and logical*

Aman paints with his brains, not with his hands. When painter Michelangelo said this 500 years ago, he did not know how far science would take this idea. The theory of lateralisation says that the human brain is separated into two cerebral hemispheres, the left and the right brain, both of which execute different functions. And painting is to do not just with the brain, but in fact, with the right side of it.

While several theories on the left-brain and right-brain dominance abound, the basics are easy. The right hemisphere controls your body's left side, and vice versa. When you use the left or logical side, you are being analytical, attentive, objective and rational. This is the part you use to process language, facts, science, math and strategies. The right side, however, is driven by feelings, beliefs, imagination and subjective thinking. It is creative, impulsive, intuitive, thoughtful and processes visuals and multi-tasks.

The brain, which works on the 'use it or lose it principle,' has often been likened to a muscle — the more you use it, the better it gets. The fact that we are either left-brained or right-brained makes it important that we improve the less-dominant side. Here are simple ways to improve the balance and the coordination between both sides. Left brain work-outs:

1. From crafting the right sentence structure to perfecting spelling and grammar, the process of writing and the planning that goes behind it is one of the best ways to enhance your analytical side and stay sharp. This could mean blogging, and even social networking may not be such a 'waste of time' after all. Tweeting compels you to spruce up your communication as your thoughts are limited to only 140 characters.
2. Logic-fuelled activities such as crosswords, anagrams, Sudoku, tough math problems or a game of chess are great for stimulating the left brain. Try and crack reasoning and aptitude tests that are freely available online to boost your grey cells.
3. Being systematic, it turns out, has more advantages than improving productivity and acing time management. Making to-do lists, organising data, chalking plans for the day or maintaining a diary aid in improving your left brain.

4. Learn a new skill, activity or language. Doing so optimises left brain functions as it is good at being focused and works well with conditioning exercises.
5. READ that book, don't skim. Reading engages your mind wonderfully while skimming content and running your eyes through a page only weakens the left brain in the long run.

### Right brain work-outs

1. Astute observation plays a key role in developing a photographic memory. Take five minutes off to minutely observe your train station or your desk space. Remember the details with your eyes closed, and for authentic results, record yourself while at it so you know where you stand. Doing this regularly will strengthen your powers of observation.
2. Word association, doodling and memory games help unlock your right brain's coolest weapon — creativity. If you have shied away from sketching or painting, now is the time to take up that sketch-pen or brush. Experiment...for your brain's sake.
3. Take up an art of your interest; music, painting, dance, theatre or writing, as they are all right-brain activities. Playing an instrument is a guaranteed right brain booster. While humming to your favourite tunes, make up random lyrics that rhyme.
4. Use the Japanese art of Origami to spark up your motor skills. Folding paper into fascinating shapes will push you to be more innovative with each attempt. So will making knick-knacks from junk.
5. Thinking up a strategy, visualising it and then immediately implementing it is the right brain's delight. So when you play sports such as tennis, table tennis or badminton, the right brain is at its peak.

### Striking the right (and left) balance

1. Juggling demands great hand-eye co-ordination and gets them in action together. But to offset your habits and left or right brain dominance, try doing daily activities with your non-dominant hand. If you are right-handed, use your left hand to write, and vice versa.
2. Around 80 years ago, psychologist John Stroop came up with an interesting test to gauge the ability of brain's two sides to work together. Use alternate-colored pens to write a series of colour names but try to read only the color. So you may write 'Yellow' using a blue pen, but the challenge is to read it as Yellow and so on. This conflict-inducing test combines colour and language awareness and activates the anterior cingulate, a section of the brain that lies between the left and right hemispheres and helps resolve conflicts between them.