

CENTRAL GAUTENG



MASTERS ATHLETICS

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2017

FROM THE CHAIR.....

Ever heard people say: 'A healthy mind leans towards a healthy body?' This is no myth. I have yet to see a chronic depressed athlete. Maybe you do have your 'off' days, but an active athlete always see the silver lining on the dark clouds.

All of us get our obstacles and disappointment days, but we don't let it get the better of us. Athletes tend to forget the negative encounter as soon as you hit the tarmac or the road.

Like any other activity, we all head towards a period of rest and a well-deserved one too, as it has been a tough year with a number of challenges. It is not easy to have a full-time job and still train hard.

For the lucky ones to have reached retirement already – thank you for your continued support and motivation to keep exercising.

Remember the challenge..... I ask each Masters athlete to recruit at least one Masters Athlete in 2018.

I wish all of you a peaceful and relaxed holiday and for those of you who travels to holiday destinations: May you have quality time with your family/friends and drive safe on the road.

See you In January..... Let us make 2018 an even greater year!

Zelda Claassen

MESSAGE FROM THE FREE STATE:

Despite the problems that popped up on the Free State Masters Athletics Championship day, it all ended well. Like the old saying: 'Ends well....all's well.' They had a record amount of entries. The most important end result is that there were many athletes who had personal best performances and they were satisfied with their times and distances.

The medal standards were achieved 26 times and national standards 8 times. We congratulate all the athlete and are appreciative of all the athletes from other province who supported us and helped to make the event purposeful.

When you encounter problems, it must not always be seen as a bad experience, but a stepping stone to make the next event even better. We aim to make the 2018 South African Masters Athletics Championship which will be hosted at the Mangaung stadium a pleasurable experience for all.

Dinah is already hard at work to get everything ready and in place for the 2018 SA Championship. We are hopeful to yet again receive a record amount of entries for a National Championship.

Nearing the end of 2017, we want to make use of this opportunity to wish all a blessed Christmas and festive holiday season.

Hope all get some fitness training done this holiday period. Drive safe and stay fit.

Regards: Free State Masters Athletic Committee.

BRAIN TRAINING

A topic that is discussed and spread in the social media nowadays is 'Brain-Training'.

What is this about and is it just another gimmick?

Brain training is an exercise program for the brain to stimulate the brain and is based on the science of neuroplasticity.

Brain plasticity is your brain's natural ability to remodel itself throughout life. The brain is always changing.... Sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worst. What brain training exercises do is harness that change and direct it in ways that can enhance your overall performance – both physically and mentally.

Exercise design:

Brain training exercises are grouped into six categories: Attention, Memory, Brain speed, Intelligence, People Skills and navigation. There is a good reason to include such exercises..... here is why:

Throughout life our brains successfully absorb a lot of information from our senses. But for most of us, including most over the age of 40, our brains could do better. When we're in our 30's, six core trends begin to affect brain function. Over time, they have noticeable impacts on our memory, thinking and focus. They include:

1. Brightness: 'Tired' thinking and acting:

Our brain slowly turns down its dimmer switch as we get older. It can take longer for us to be sharp in our mornings and we can often find ourselves having moments of inattention or drowsiness that frustrate our getting the most out of our days. Sleep or rest does not restore our liveliness as well as it used to.

2. Speed: Slower Processing:

Our brains often slow down, but the speed of information coming in from the senses (sights and sounds happening in our lives) does not. Over time the brain begins to miss many details, making it more difficult for us to react and remember what we saw or heard.

3. Accuracy: Missing details:

Like the grooves of an old record, the brain's pathways often get fuzzier, scratchier and often distorted. You cannot expect your brain to make a good recording of what is happening when there is so much noise on your sound track, or when your brain's recording of what you see is blurred and indistinct.

4. Recognition: Poorer understanding:

We have to combine information in special ways to understand and correctly interpret those things we see or hear. Losing the ability to recognize and old friend or misinterpreting their facial expression or is a common problem in life. Retaining keen abilities to recognize and interpret what we are seeing and hearing are of high importance.

5. Clarity: Interference from a noisy world:

In your youth our brains were astounding good at cancelling out all of that noise that comes from the world, or that comes, as a barrage of disruptions, from a worrisome or distracting brain itself. But with age, interference starts to get in the way. This is partly due to a loss in our ability to really concentrate. It's the true source of a lot of frustration, anxiety and error in older life.

6. Recording: Poorer ability to control learning, or to 'rise to the occasion':

The brain uses chemicals called neuromodulators to determine what information is important to record and process. With each passing decade, our brains produce fewer neuromodulators and this hinders the brain's ability to record new information – in other words, it's ability to learn and remember.

When these trends begin, we don't recognize the problem in the moment because we (unknowingly) use context to fill in what we missed. In other words, we draw on our extensive life experience to fill in the blanks in order to make sense of incomplete information. As the years pass, the gaps become too big for context to fill in. When this occurs, it can be hard to catch and respond to the information even at that moment.

What is are the benefits to care for your root support?

Brain training exercises are designed to reverse the root problems. The primary goals are to:

- Brighten your spirit
- Speed up brain processing
- Sharpen processing accuracy
- Improve fast-recognition abilities
- Knock down the disrupting noises that disrupt attention, sensory accuracy and memory.
- Recover the power of the brain machinery that controls how well you learn and how much you remember.

Ever went to do shopping and forgot your shopping list at home? Then you return home to find that you did not remember to buy half of the items on your shopping list. By exercising the roots of memory, however, you will find that you not only can remember the grocery list better, you can also remember conversations with your neighbour , tasks at work or that word that is on the tip of your tongue and where you left your key, phone or an item your placed in a safekeeping place. These generalized changes are all what changes the frustrations in your life and improve quality of life.

*The above article is obtained from BrainHQ website.

Now that we know why brain training is necessary – where do we start?

1. Do not start the day as 'laze-is-fair'. In other words don't linger around and get ready for the day at a slow pace. Set your alarm to get up at a pre-chosen time that will enable you to get ready for the day in a specific time. When you get up, do your personal hygiene routine and dressing first and allocate a time that you should do it in. Make your bed..... Making your bed every morning instills a sense of responsibility. Do not indulge in self-pity and follow this routine even on your off-days..... although you can set the alarm clock slightly later than normal.

2. Allocate a place in your home for storage of items. Make a list of your storage spaces and allocate similar items to similar storage spaces. Before looking at a storage space, try to recall what items are stored in a specific storage space. I.e.: Cleaning equipment: What cleaning equipment is kept in the allocated storage space? What is the make of the cleaning material? How much is left in each container? This might seem an unnecessary exercise at first, but you will be surprised that when you go to the shop you start to remember what to buy even without a shopping list.
3. Sit quiet for 5 minutes and try to recall/recognize and differentiate between all the sounds that is audible to your ear. I.e.; traffic in the road, birds singing in the tree, the fridge compressor starting up, etc. This is a learning exercise to help you to be able to listen attentively. You can make this fun-filled by challenging the children/grandchildren to a competition as to who can recognize the most sounds.
4. During your day, look and see what is surrounding you. Take a minute break every hour or so to identify objects in your office and workplace. As I sit here typing this, I did this and surprisingly I saw the wall and blinds are dirty..... I did not notice this before. This exercise sharpens your awareness of your surroundings.
5. Give attention to detail. You often find people say..... I have heard..... But they cannot recall who or when or where they have heard. When you hear something interesting..... Remember who said it, where and when it was said. Have you ever found that you are introduced to someone and a few minutes later you have to ask: "What is your name again?" This is because you did not pay full attention when you were introduced.
6. Challenge yourself. Do not let negativity prevent you from performing any task..... if you do not try you will not succeed. Set yourself challenges and don't even think of failing. Learn a new hobby, something that stimulates the brain, whether it is creative like art or a physical activity you have never done before. Don't give up with the first failed attempt.... remember, the key words in brain training is consistency and progress!

With positivity you have halfway achieved your goal!