

# THE SHARPBRAINS CHECKLIST™

## 10 Questions to Choose the Right Brain Fitness Program for You

How to Use: Answer all of these questions before you buy or use any product or service, computer-based or not, that makes any brain-related claims.

	Questions to Consider	Why
<b>Based on Scientific Research?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Are there scientists (ideally neuropsychologists) and a scientific advisory board behind the program?</li><li>2. Are there published, peer-reviewed scientific papers written by those scientists? How many?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Neuropsychologists are neuroscientists with a specialization in measuring and understanding human cognition and brain structure and function.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> PubMed (<a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/">www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/</a>) is a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine (<a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/">www.nlm.nih.gov/</a>) that includes millions of citations science journals. If a scientist has not published a paper that appears in that database, he or she cannot make scientific claims.</li></ul>
<b>Measurable Claims and Benefits?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. What are the specific benefits claimed for using this program?</li><li>4. Does the program tell me what part of my brain or which cognitive skill I am exercising, and is there an independent assessment to measure my progress?</li><li>5. Is it a structured program with guidance on how many hours per week and days per week to use it?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Some programs describe the benefits so vaguely that it is impossible to tell if they will have any measurable results.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Brain exercise is not a magic pill. You have to do the exercises in order to benefit, so you need clarity on the effort required.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Simply by practicing something, we get better at it over time. The question is whether the improvement experienced in the program will transfer into real life. For that to happen we need assessments that are distinct from the exercises themselves.</li></ul>
<b>Ensures Cross-Training?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Do the exercises vary and teach me something new?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> The only way to exercise important parts of our brain is by tackling novel challenges.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> In the case of brain fitness, "Use it or Lose It" applies to all the different functional areas of our brain and the skills we need those areas to perform.</li></ul>
<b>Is it Exercise – or Entertainment?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Does the program challenge and motivate me, or does it feel like it would become easy once I learned it?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Just as we need to work out our arm and leg muscles with increasing weight to develop them, good brain exercise requires increasing difficulty as well.</li></ul>
<b>Good Fit for Me?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Does the program fit my personal goals?</li><li>9. Does the program fit my lifestyle?</li><li>10. Am I ready and willing to do the program, or would it be too stressful?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Each individual has different goals/needs when it comes to brain health. For example, some want to manage anxiety, others to improve short-term memory, listen better, improve concentration levels, or reduce the probability of developing problems such as Alzheimer's over the long term.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Some brain exercise programs have great short-term results but are very intense - requiring up to 5 hours a week. Others may not have such clear short-term benefits, but may require a shorter time commitment.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Excess stress reduces, or may even inhibit, neurogenesis (the creation of new neurons). So, it is important to make sure not to do things that stress us in unhealthy ways.</li></ul>



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BRAIN FITNESS FOR ALL

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