



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM ALWAYS BEST CARE

Exercise Your Brain: Play Video Games!

Research is showing that challenging your brain as you get older can help prevent cognitive decline. One recommendation is to learn something new, like a different language. For older adults who are not electronically inclined, playing video games is like mastering a whole new medium.

If you have children or grandchildren, especially boys who play games, you may have noticed that many video games focus on blowing up things. Fortunately for older adults who are looking for something more complex, many new games focus on more peaceful topics, such as detective work or travel.

The following suggestions come from several websites (see list of sources below). You can play some on your computer at home, some on your smartphone and tablets and others using a home video game console such as Wii or Xbox. Prices range from free to \$50.

80 Days. Based loosely on the Jules Verne novel, *Around the World in 80 Days*, you plot your own route across the globe.

Angry Birds. This popular game has you launching the birds against their enemy, green pigs that are hiding in flimsy structures. It's a simple but satisfying endeavor, according to the hundreds of thousands who have played this game.

Civilization V. Build your own civilization, from a roving tribe to an advanced high-tech society, while learning about how science and culture develop.

First Draft of the Revolution. Your high-ranking husband has cast you aside for reasons you don't understand. You're given clues in the form of letters, through which you must figure out what's going on.

I Am Alive. The premise of this post-apocalyptic action-adventure is that most of the world's population has been wiped out, and you are returning to the dust-covered city of your home, where you have to climb, scavenge and fight your way to survival.

Journey. Steeped in mystical and religious imagery with simple visual design and intuitive controls, Journey lets you find your path, and rewards you when you succeed.

Kentucky Route Zero. In this visually beautiful game that incorporates magical realism, you point and click on where you want to walk, decide which characters and objects to interact with and choose your responses.

L.A. Noire. As a detective in post-war Los Angeles, you solve cases by investigating crime scenes, collecting evidence and interrogating witnesses.

Labyrinth 2. You guide metal balls through a maze that offers tricks and traps to slow you down.

One Chance. When a pathogen kills all living cells on Earth, you must choose how to spend your remaining six days.

Osmos. This multi-media experience reimagines evolution as a battle between ghostly spheres that could be tiny organisms or massive galaxies. To grow and survive, you have to absorb smaller creatures.

Minecraft. The hugely successful and creative game allows you to explore vast landscapes and construct your own houses, castles and whatever else you want to make, while avoiding zombies.

Monument Valley. Players must guide their character through a series of landscapes that combine optical illusions and the irrational architecture of an M. C. Escher print. This stylish and evocative game was considered one of 2014's best tablet titles.

Papers, Please. Winner of 2014's prestigious GameCity prize, you play the role of a border guard at an Eastern European country and must decide who can pass through and who must be turned away based on a series of ever-changing rules.

Red Dead Redemption. You're a retired, Wild West outlaw who is pressed into hunting down your former gang. Plotlines come from classic Western movies.

The Sims. 3 In this popular game, you create virtual people called "Sims" and place them in houses you build or that already exist. You help satisfy their desires, whether for love or material goods. In this third version, you travel the world and learn about local customs and cultures.

Sources

"Games for Humanity," [Rock Paper Shotgun](#)

"Top 20 best video games for beginners," Feb. 19, 2015, [Guardian](#)

"Top 10 Video Games for Grown-Ups," April 11, 2012, [Next Avenue](#)

"Phone and Tablet Games for Grown-Ups," March 19, 2013, [Next Avenue](#)

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