Boost Your Brain Health with Bridge

Who would think a game of cards that can improve memory, concentration and analytical skills? It might sound silly, but it’s not just any game – it’s bridge.

Bridge is a trick-taking game played with a standard deck of cards where two partnerships challenge each other. It’s an entertaining pastime, but bridge may also serve as a tool to counter the effects of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. In fact, the Alzheimer’s Association has pointed to the healthy aging benefits of games like bridge on its website.

The aspects of playing bridge, like building strategies and applying math skills, have been shown to strengthen the brain. In fact, some of the keenest minds play bridge. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have both played for years – sometimes even together.

With an untold number of deals possible, players keep learning and improving every day. This is why bridge becomes a lifelong passion for many.

One example is 103-year-old Lily Hansen of Ludington, Mich. Hansen told [AARP Bulletin](http://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/info-2015/bridge-for-brain-health.3.html) that playing twice a week helps her stay sharp and active. She has been playing bridge for nearly nine decades.

“Duplicate [bridge] is competitive,” she said. “It keeps your brain working. I honestly believe that.”

Duplicate bridge is a version of the game that removes the element of luck. With duplicate style, the focus is on players’ strategy because each partnership in the field plays the same cards.

The latest research also shows that staying socially active can be just as important to brain health as mental workouts. Bridge helps there, too, as four people are needed to play the game, and bridge clubs have multiple tables playing at the same time. But for those who prefer to play from home, online bridge games are available every day at websites like Bridge Base Online and OKbridge.

In North America, the American Contract Bridge League serves as a resource for bridge players. Not only does it help you locate nearby teachers and clubs, but it also hosts two kinds of online bridge games on its website. Just Play Bridge is a never-ending solitaire-style bridge game, and MiniBridge is an introductory trick-taking game.

The ACBL also awards masterpoints to duplicate bridge competitors. Winners receive masterpoints so that the players can measure their success over time. Corresponding ranks, like Life Master, are achieved by the number and type of masterpoints a player has.

Because of the possible links between bridge and brain health, the ACBL partners with The Longest Day, a national fundraising event led by the Alzheimer’s Association in which participants raise money by doing an activity all day during the summer solstice.

The ACBL is an inaugural partner of the event, and thousands of bridge enthusiasts gather across the country each year to raise money through playing bridge. After five years, more than $3 million has been raised for Alzheimer’s research and care due to the effort of the organization’s members.

Those in [CITY] who are interested in learning or playing bridge can contact [NAME OF CLUB] at XXX-XXX-XXXX or [xyz@abc.com](mailto:xyz@abc.com). [NAME OF CLUB] hosts weekly games for all skill levels on [DAYS]. The club’s next series of lessons begin [DATE].