

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Once again, there is a new year ahead of us. While January marks a halfway point for those of us in education, it is, of course, a beginning, too.



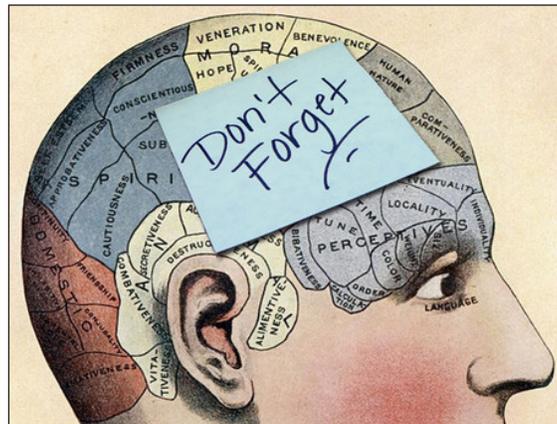
It's common to use the new year as a time for fresh starts. I would guess that the most common resolution each year is to exercise more and to eat less.

An interview with Dr. Daniel Amen that appeared in *Forbes* last month gave a different twist to the idea of exercise: exercising the mind to improve one's memory.

Amen is a physician, psychiatrist, neuroscientist and author whose specialty is brain health.

In the article, Amen cites several ways to exercise one's brain.

- Commit yourself to spending 15 minutes each day to learn something new.
- In that same vein, Amen recommends taking a class, preferably on a subject that is unrelated to what you do in your day-to-day life. "It is important to challenge your brain to learn new and novel things," such as square dancing, yoga or sculpture.
- Just as learning something outside of your daily life is helpful, so is learning a new facet at your job. Amen suggests cross-training at work by learning another job. "This strategy benefits both the business and its employees, as workers will develop new skills and better brain function."



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- Breaking one's routine is another way to stimulate new parts of the brain. For example, use your non-dominant hand to perform everyday tasks, such as brushing your teeth, writing or using a computer mouse. "Whenever you make a change in your routine, you encourage neuroplasticity, which is when your brain makes new connections, basically reorganizing itself to adjust to a new environment or situation," according to a blog on the Christa McAuliffe School of Arts & Sciences (www.cmasas.org/breaking-routines-and-cultivating-spontaneous-joy).

- Take advantage of music's benefits, whether you're listening or performing. "There is significant research suggesting that both learning to play music and listening to music, especially classical music, can enhance memory and mood." According to an article on the blog Lifehack, "Researchers discovered that music can help you learn and recall information better."

Read Amen's full interview at www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2017/12/04/dr-daniel-amen-how-to-use-your-brain-to-be-a-more-effective-worker/#5a456b3c6cb2.

Ty Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org.

