



Dear readers,

Join me in welcoming back Mackenzie Pennington. Mack has been our wellness intern for the last two summers and has just “virtually” graduated with her Master’s Degree in Public Health. Congratulations and welcome back, Mack!

-Dr. Pat

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

If I had to choose one thing that I have learned while finishing school and working from home these past few months, it’s that I am much more productive, focused, and motivated when I follow a daily routine.

Adapting to a new routine, or a “new normal,” has been a struggle. After transitioning to home in mid-March, I immediately noticed a downward shift in my productivity, focus, and motivation when it came to school and work. For someone who is typically highly self-motivated, this shift felt foreign and uncomfortable and, admittedly, it often still does.

While I haven’t found the quick fix to increase productivity, focus, or motivation, I have tried to implement a few behaviors that push me in the right direction. Some of these include going to bed and waking up at a similar time, taking frequent walk breaks, and setting a timer on my phone to focus on work in blocks of time. Recently, I learned about brain training and have started including a brain training session in my daily routine.

Just as you can strengthen your muscles by lifting weights, you can strengthen your mind by challenging your brain.

Just as you can strengthen your muscles by lifting weights, you can strengthen your mind by challenging your brain. Brain training is essentially a workout for the mind, intended to perk up lazy brain cells. While we may not realize it, many of us operate on autopilot from day to day: taking the same route to work, performing the same tasks, engaging in the same after-work activities, going to bed, and waking up and doing it all over again. Operating on autopilot doesn’t challenge your brain in a way that new experiences or activities can. Welcome to brain training!

Brain training can be practiced in a variety of ways. In fact, anything that takes the brain outside of routine thinking can be considered brain training. Mobile apps or online programs such as Luminosity, CogniFit, and Total Brain have games and activities intended to test and improve brain-related components such as memory, focus, attention, speed, and problem-solving skills. While some people may prefer offline activities, brain training can also be practiced through crossword puzzles, Sudoku, reading, sports, dance lessons, learning a new language or skill, joining a book club, or simply taking a new route home. Because there are so many ways to practice brain training, it is important to choose not only what appeals to you, but what is most challenging for your mind.

People who have participated in brain training activities have reported improved memory and feeling sharper, quicker, and more able to notice important details. After learning about brain training and taking a brain training assessment, I chose a personalized plan that includes games and activities to help me achieve sharper focus. Considering my struggle with adjusting to a new routine these past few months, I am hoping that regularly training my brain will increase my productivity, motivation, and more importantly, improve my focus.

Here is what I've learned. I need to get in my daily run. I had unknowingly let it slide. That run helps me unwind, recharge, and get back in the game. I am lacing up my sneakers for my fourth run this week. Then, its back to work!



www.luminosity.com



www.cognifit.com



www.totalbrain.com



**MACKENZIE
PENNINGTON**

Wellness Intern

Meet Mackenzie Pennington, our guest author this month. Mack has been our wellness intern for the last two summers and has just graduated with her Master's Degree in Public Health.



**PATRICIA M.
FULLER, PHD**

Director, Wellness
Engineering

Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 20+ years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

Have a Question? Email it to Dr. Pat: pfuller@bks-partners.com

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical professional.

