

4 Senses to Activate Clarity, Motivation, and Stress-Relief



By Claudie Gordon-Pomares

Mendability - Sensory Enrichment for Brain Healing

Neuroscience made practical

When I was 5, my best friend Simon stopped coming to school. He had Down syndrome and had been sent to an institution... Since then I knew I would go to school and become a neuroscientist to find ways to help vulnerable people feel peace, comfort and joy so that the world can be a better place.

The good news is that the neuroscience field of Environmental Enrichment has been studying ways to boost brain development, increase brain reserves, and improve function. Scientists have successfully treated many neurological disorders, and most animal lab protocols can be easily adapted for home use.

In this guide, I will share with you a few that you can do yourself very easily.



Step 1: Smell

Smell: Dopamine, Clarity and Motivation

Dopamine is a chemical in the brain that influences how we feel pleasure, stay motivated, and maintain focus. If you have ADHD, you may find it interesting that dopamine is what the brain uses to tell your muscles to stop moving... In animal studies, scientists discovered that smelling a pleasant aroma can double your dopamine levels for up to 3 hours.

Bring your favorite scent to your desk and start your brain boost session with 2 deep breaths of your scent.

The aroma can come in any form. The only thing that matters for this sensory stimulation protocol is that you enjoy the experience. It can be a candle, essential oil, scented hand lotion, chapstick, hot cocoa, incense stick, etc.





Step 2: Dim the Lights

Dim the Lights: Reduce Sensory Overload

When the brain is tired, anxious or overloaded it doesn't filter sensory inputs as well. When it is not 100% sure what is happening, it turns on its protection mode in case you need to fight, flee or freeze. This doesn't only happen when a bear is about to attack. It also happens when the brain is not sure what sound is coming from the other side of the door, or when your brain is subconsciously processing the neon light above you that keeps strobing.

Dim the lights in your office, if you can, or close your eyes for this step of the brain boost session.

For similar reasons, consider also keeping your workspace tidy, your walls minimally decorated, and wearing noise-cancelling headphones.





Step 3: Art & Music

Look at & Listen to Art: Dopamine, Serotonin, Calm and Confidence

You already know the benefits of dopamine in your brain. Serotonin is a brain chemical too and it helps regulate mood, sleep, appetite, learning, and overall feelings of well-being and happiness. Looking at beautiful art and listening to beautiful music triggers a boost of both dopamine and serotonin.

Step 3: look at art and listen to relaxing classical music at the same time.

Choose art you find beautiful and music with multiple instruments playing harmoniously. The brain's analysis of these tracks is where the magic happens. You will know it's the right choice when you get the chills. Avoid vocals, as processing speech involves other brain functions, diluting the therapeutic effect.





Step 4: Touch

Touch: Serotonin and Stress Resilience

There are 5 types of receptors in the skin. A gentle touch is the most direct and powerful way to boost Serotonin. Have you had the perfect back rub or hand massage and felt chills? This "frisson" is the physiological effect of a Serotonin boost.

If you work from home with a partner, enjoy gentle touch in a passive state. **Close your eyes and get a perfect back tickle.** Ask them to use their fingertips instead of their palm, for more sensory tracks.

Alternatively, use a backscratcher yourself (*While movement and task planning dilute the stimulation, the fact that you can control exactly where and how to scratch compensates a little*) or spend a few seconds exploring a texture board.





Habits and Family Sessions

You can multiply the benefits of these protocols by integrating it into daily life and doing it as a family, especially if one of your children has challenges.

Doing these brain games as a family will make them feel more like a fun family moment rather than a "therapy", the child becomes more relaxed and interested. The child can observe and feel safe before it's their turn. It creates a supportive dynamic, helping the child feel more connected and empowered by the process, leading to deeper involvement and greater success with the sensory activities.

Adding sensory enrichment to everyday tasks—such as a quick toe massage when putting on socks or a scent-based activity before a meal—can make these moments feel natural and easy to maintain. By habit-stacking in this way, sensory enrichment becomes part of your daily rhythm, reducing stress and ensuring consistent practice without feeling like an extra burden.





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Want more? I design custom brain boost and repair programs

Scientists have already treated successfully many neurological conditions, from Autism to Alzheimer's. Environmental Enrichment can induce self-repair in the brain, reverse trauma and prompt it to build reserves against stress and trauma. Sensory Enrichment Therapy is my translation of this science and it has been **validated in randomized controlled trials** with populations of children with autism, ADHD, Rett syndrome and with seniors with dementia.

Let's talk!

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