

“Instead, I am talking about things that take you out of your daily habits and make you think. Just varying your routine can help keep your mind active and engaged.

“The challenges you set for yourself can be pretty simple:

- Try cooking new recipes.
- Figure out new driving routes to your usual destinations.
- Do puzzles and brainteasers. Crossword puzzles, math and word problems are all great.
- Rediscover challenging games you can play alone or with friends. Scrabble, Boggle and many card and computer games really make you think.
- Get on the Internet, if you aren't already. You'll be learning computer skills and gaining access to a wealth of information.
- Join a club to play chess, bridge or poker.
- Find books to read that make you stretch your mind.

“The challenges can be more complex:

- Plan a do-it-yourself project such as building a deck or designing a new garden layout.
- Write about your life experiences.
- Take a class in a new or old skill, such as playing a musical instrument or painting.
- Learn a new language.”