



## **Intellectual dimension and brain health**

Research tells us that performing novel and complex activities increases mental function. Something novel, or new, and something complex, or difficult, is important for cellular development in the brain. Something as simple as taking a new route to work can meet one of these requirements as beneficial for brain health.

Other examples of novel and complex brain workouts could include learning a new language or taking up a musical instrument. Many studies show that people who speak multiple languages or who play music have a lesser degree of developing dementia. Hobbies such as knitting and gardening also help with brain health, as doing those things well require planning in advance and “seeing” what will happen after certain steps are made. For example, planting a garden requires giving some thought to how plants will interact together and how much space is required once the seeds get to maturity. Likewise, knitters are often mentally a few steps ahead of their hands when honing their craft.

### **Intellectual brain building checklist**

- ✓ Learn a new language, including sign language
- ✓ Learn to play a musical instrument or sing
- ✓ Practice brain fitness exercises daily
- ✓ Travel or use new routes to familiar places
- ✓ Engage in artistic expression
- ✓ Attend the opera, museum or other arts
- ✓ Write on a daily basis
- ✓ Read and discuss content with others
- ✓ Play board games