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What do you forget?

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Putting on their thinking caps for a brain-exercise session



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY JASTRAB

MENTAL WORKOUT: At the Fair Lawn Senior Center, Reena Chawla tells elders they can stave-off the forgetfulness and fuzzy thinking many associate with aging. Using props and exercises, Chawla offers her audience methods for training their minds back into shape.

Elders practice mental drills from *The Brain Studio* — a lesson they won't forget

— By Jerry Jastrab —

FAIR LAWN — Reena Chawla advises her audience that the brain dysfunction the popular media tell them they can expect with age is vastly exaggerated. At her *Brain Studio* lectures, the Mahwah woman tells elders that the forgetfulness and confusion can be substantially

reduced by doing mental exercises and by performing routine tasks in a special, more conscious way.

"We right-away worry about the heart," Chawla told her rapt audience at the Fair Lawn Senior Center. "We use a diet, we do exercises. But what about the brain?"

In her lecture's *Tips and Tricks* section, Chawla emphasizes "visualization." Elders should note what

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Elders learn exercises for the brain

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they are seeing and "There has to be the senses-to-brain connection," she said.

Once the information is absorbed, "Notes are OK," Chawla reassures. Also, repetition of the information — so it can be remembered more easily is helpful. In addition, "associations" — linking the data to other, easy-to-remem-

ber facts and things — is very effective.

"What do you forget?" Chawla asked the Center members.

"Where I put my keys," was one answer, followed by "Whether I took my medications," and "I go to the basement and I can't remember what I went there for."

Chawla advised, "The things we do as a routine are the things we forget first." 