



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

BRAIN
HEALTH
INITIATIVE



ACADEMY FOR
BRAIN HEALTH
AND PERFORMANCE

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Brain Health Matters and Experiencing, Appreciating, and Creating the Arts Make a Difference

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and substantial disruption across all sectors, including the arts and culture community. By March 2020, most arts and cultural institutions across the Suncoast region were indefinitely closed (or at least with their programming majorly modified). In-person events and performances were canceled or postponed. The Brain Health Initiative believes arts and culture experiences serve as a brain health protective factor that promotes brain performance and fights brain illness. Therefore, BHI encourages all brain health champions to **support the Arts and Culture community**.

Earlier this year, the BHI reviewed the impact experiencing, appreciating, and creating the arts and culture can have on brain health and performance. As we reflect on this remarkable year, we thought we would bring this information back to your forefront. It turns out there's a lot of good stuff happening in our brains and bodies when we experience the arts and culture. Creativity in and of itself is important for boosting brain health and performance, for remaining healthy, fighting illness, and increasing our well-being. Whether observing, appreciating, or creating, the arts change our brains in really good ways.

The human brain is uniquely wired for the arts. The arts can make us happier, healthier, and smarter while amplifying our human potential. The arts are for all of us and extends to any type of creative expression: drawing, painting, collaging, sculpting clay, writing poetry, photography, cake decorating, knitting, scrapbooking, creating music, singing, dancing, performing, cooking, gardening, building a model, woodworking — the sky's the limit. Anything that engages our creative mind — the ability to make connections between unrelated things and imagining new ways of its being — is good for us, for our bodies and our brains.

There is an increasing amount of scientific evidence that demonstrates that the arts enhance brain function. For example, it impacts brain wave patterns, the nervous system, and increases positive emotions by actually raising the level of serotonin (the hormone that helps to regulate mood, well-being and happiness, among other important functions).

The arts can change our outlook and the way we experience the world across the lifespan. For young people, decades of research have provided more than a sufficient amount of data to prove that arts education — to experience, appreciate, and create — impacts everything from overall academic achievement, to school engagement, social and emotional development, and so much more.

For those of us who are more mature, the arts are a powerful and fun opportunity to optimize our cognitive skills and build our cognitive reserve. They also often bring the bonus of social engagement. Quite simply, the arts are invaluable to our brain development, maturation and aging, to enhancing brain health, to fighting brain illness and to optimizing functioning and performance individually, and as a society.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO BOOST YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Florida's Suncoast is an arts and culture mecca. There are a wide variety of opportunities to create, experience, and appreciate the arts — no matter what your interests. Get out or connect and experience the Arts throughout the region. Check out these sites for more information:

- Ringling Museum
- Van Wezel Performing Arts
- Visit Sarasota
- My Manatee
- Art Center Manatee
- Arts and Culture Lakewood Ranch
- Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County
 - Calendar of all events
 - 2020/2021 Arts and Culture Guide
- Sarasota Magazine -Arts and Entertainment
- Sarasota Observer- Arts and Entertainment
- Bradenton Herald - Arts and Culture
- Herald-Tribune- Arts and Entertainment
- Ringling College Galleries and Exhibitions

- Sarasota Orchestra
- Bradenton Symphony Orchestra
- Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe
- Bradenton Gulf Islands Arts and Culture
- The Players Centre for Performing Arts
- Manatee Performing Arts Center
- Asolo Repertory Theatre
- Sarasota Opera

- Florida Studio Theatre
- The Sarasota Ballet
- The Venice Symphony
- The Venice Concert Band
- The Venice Chorale
- The Venice Institute for Performing Arts
- Venice Theatre
- Let's Create Art

Happy experiencing, appreciating, and creating!

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is a collaborative effort with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention and optimization of performance*. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*** To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).