TRAIN YOUR BRAIN FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

Unlock your brain’s unlimited potential
What’s Your Edge?

Your edge is your prefrontal cortex (PFC) – the most highly evolved part of your brain that sits right behind your forehead.

The best decisions you’ve ever made were because you were using your PFC. The worst decisions you’ve ever made – the ones that cost you MILLIONS OF DOLLARS – were because you weren’t.

Your PFC is the executive part of your brain. It’s responsible for rational/logical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, focus, will-power and the ability to reason. It’s also incredibly fragile and goes offline easily.

We teach you how to strengthen your PFC (yes, physically increase the size of it!) and manage it so that it’s on when you need it to be.
Stress causes you to be anxious, fearful and irrational. The more stressed you are the more IRRATIONAL you are.

Your amygdala, the part of your brain responsible for initiating the stress response, evolved for the kill-or-be-killed environment your ancestors lived in.

As a financial professional, you still live in the kill-or-be-killed world; with the main difference being what part of your brain you’re using to survive.

Your brain is not designed to deal with chronic stress. The stress response evolved to deal with an immediate threat and to be resolved quickly – either death or escape.

Because *chronic stress* damages the neurons in your prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, the consequences are:

- You cannot think clearly, logically and rationally
- Your ability to take in new information, understand it and retain it is drastically reduced
- Your ability to retrieve long-term memories is reduced

We teach you how to reduce stress so you can remain calm under pressure.
The #1 destructive tendency is *negative thinking*.

- Your amygdala does not know the difference between a real threat and a perceived threat – so just *thinking* a negative thought initiates the stress response.
- If you are mentally beating yourself up because your biggest position just missed the quarter or your largest client just chewed you out; you are negatively affecting your brain (yes, your thoughts physically change your brain.)
- When your amygdala hijacks your prefrontal cortex (when stressed) – *your IQ drops 10-15 points!*\(^1\)
- There are things you can do to reverse the stress response quickly to stop yourself from making an immediate bad decision.
- We teach you scientifically proven methods to reverse the stress process in less than 3 minutes, allowing you to get your thinking brain back on quickly.

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\(^1\) The IQ drops in the cortex, not the whole brain.
Meditation is an exercise for your mind that changes your brain for the positive.

Research from universities such as Harvard and UCLA have shown that meditation:

- Increases thickness of the cerebral cortex and prefrontal cortex (executive brain)[2]
- Decreases activity in the amygdala (fear, aggression and stress response)[3]
- Increases the size of the hippocampus (memory and learning)[4]
- Increases production of “feel good” hormones:
  - Serotonin (calming effect)[5]
  - Dopamine (pleasure, motivation, focus)[6]
Whatever you focus your attention on is how you will physically shape your brain.

If you worry, get angry or stressed often, then that is what you are shaping your brain for – to get more of what you don’t want.

Or you could consciously train your mind and change your brain to get more of what you do want.

Neurons That Fire Together Wire Together

- Irrational Behavior
- Anger
- Emotional Outbursts
- Reduced Intelligence

Untrained Mind
A research study conducted by Dr. Sara Lazar[2] at Harvard Medical School, showed as little as 8 weeks of meditation resulted in a measurable increased thickness of the cerebral cortex and particularly the prefrontal cortex.

To put this in perspective, a thinning cerebral cortex is associated with old age, dementia and reduced cognitive ability.

The practice of meditating daily makes your PFC stronger; meaning you can use it more efficiently and for longer periods of time.
Meditation Increases the Size of Your Hippocampus

A group of researchers at UCLA\textsuperscript{[4]} found that experienced meditators had more gray matter in the hippocampus than non-meditators.

The hippocampus is responsible for memory and learning.

"We know that people who consistently meditate have a singular ability to cultivate positive emotions, retain emotional stability and engage in mindful behavior," said Eileen Luders, lead author and a postdoctoral research fellow at the UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging.

"The observed differences in brain anatomy might give us a clue why meditators have these exceptional abilities."
How do you experience the effects of meditation?

This information comes from research at well known institutions such as: Harvard, UCLA, University of Washington, University of Pennsylvania and Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

- Improved ability to focus and concentrate for extended periods of time [7]
- Improved memory, even as you age [8]
- Accelerated cognition (your brain works faster) [9]
- Reduced negative thinking, worrying [10]
- Reduced ADD and ADHD symptoms [11]

- Improved multi-tasking in high-stress environments [12]
- Reduced stress and anxiety [13]
- Improved emotional control [14]
- Improved quality of sleep [15]
How Much Time Will it Take?

• Our workshops are customized based on your needs. We can start you off with a 2 1/2 introductory workshop or set-up a more in depth program.

• We recommend exercising your mind for 20 minutes a day.
The ZenSmarts™ Brain Training Process

Our process involves 3 stages of training:

1. We teach you the basics of how your brain works; focusing on memory, learning, decision-making, focus, stress, anger and fear. With this knowledge you’ll have a better understanding of how to operate the brain you have. We then take this information and make it applicable to your daily work day; often it’s just slight changes that can have a dramatic improvement on your brain’s performance and your performance.

2. You’ll learn how your mind works; how your thoughts shape your reality and your brain – most often with disastrous consequences (i.e., bad decisions).

3. We’ll teach you mind training exercises; the cornerstone of changing your brain to be better. You’ll learn what meditation is, the latest neuroscience research showing why it works and how to do one of the easiest meditation methods available.
Why ZenSmarts™?

Meredith Hooke has over 25 years experience working in the corporate world; in sales, management and executive positions. She has worked for large corporations, Merrill Lynch and Barclays Bank and was a partner and trader in a long/short equity hedge fund for 10 years. She has worked and lived all over the world including; Sydney, London, Seoul, Paris and the US.

Meredith’s background gives her a unique insight into the pressures of both large and small organizations and working in a variety of cultures. She knows first-hand the stress of managing clients and declining markets. This is what makes her insights so valuable – she’s walked in your shoes and knows how to help you.

Meredith has been a disciplined meditator for over 16 years and a long-time student of Buddhist philosophy which focuses on understanding your mind. Having learned how to tame her own mind (which is no different than yours) she can teach you how to take control of your mind.

Although Meredith has no formal neuroscience training, she is deeply passionate about understanding the brain and taking the latest research and applying these principles to the workplace. Meredith has a neuroscientist mentor at SDSU whom she confers with regularly.

Meredith has a BA in Microbiology from Miami University and is an MMI Certified Meditation Instructor.
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Appendix

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