Tips for Developing Your Creativity

You can improve your creative ability by exercising it in the same way you can improve memorizing names or learning a new language. Exercising the right side of your brain will inevitably develop your imagination and creativity. Listed below are some ideas for exercising your creative ability, but a word of caution … they will only benefit you if you truly want to improve your creativity.

1. **Believe in your own capability:** Our mind is an amazing machine and our belief system impacts on our capabilities ‘to do’ and learn. Telling ourselves that we are creative and have the capability to generate ideas will ensure that we do not put any psychological barriers in the way of generating great ideas. The right side of our brain provides the function to generate ideas. We just have to use and exercise it.

2. **Identify your own ideas first:** When you need to come up with ideas or solutions, try to avoid going to the creative people you may have tended to rely on in the past. Take time to come up with ideas and solutions yourself first. In this way, you will naturally develop your imagination.

3. **Associate with creative people:** Creative people tend to have the power to see what might be and associating with them will spark new ideas and ways of looking at things. Look for people who are fun to talk to and have a keen sense of interest in life… an individual who will force you to exercise your imagination as you interact with them. Talking with a wide range of people from different disciplines, backgrounds, cultures and experiences will help you to see things from different perspectives and develop your imagination.

4. **Associate with children:** Pre-school-age children are the most ideal to mix with, as they generally use both sides of the brain although preferences do start to form at an early age. Their world is filled with fantasy and yours will be too, if you interact with them and explore their world and how they see simple, everyday things.

5. **Play games, puzzles or physical sports:** Certain games and puzzles can equip you with plenty of opportunity to flex your creative muscles. Games that force you to map out strategies and make moves that depend on what your opponent does. Games of chess and checkers are both good examples, as well as physical sports such as football, basketball and tennis - all of which provide creative exercise.

6. **Focus on hobbies:** Identify or use a current hobby to exercise your creativity. Hobbies such as painting, drawing or sculpture will obviously put your creative side to work. Any hobby where you need to design something from scratch will provide creative exercise, e.g. sewing, metalwork, woodwork, DIY. However, for those more scientifically inclined, technical hobbies can provide creative exercise when designing or building something new, e.g. writing new computer programmes.

7. **Actively travel:** There’s no better way to broaden and refresh your outlook than active travel. This means taking a real interest in the people, the culture of wherever you are

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travelling to. Capturing your travel with photographs, and reflecting on your experiences through those photographs, can inspire great ideas.

8. **Selectively read:** Reading selectively means choosing material that will exercise your imagination such as a good mystery or a short story. One way to exercise your imagination with short stories is to read the first half and make up your own ending. Cookbooks, repair manuals and self help guides can also be used for creative exercise if you take the ideas presented and improve them by adding, modifying or combining them with ideas of your own.

9. **Reading actively:** This means reading with a pencil in your hand and underlining the key passages as you go. Read slowly and take notes, taking time to reflect on what you have read, increasing the probability of generating new ideas. Create a mind map for example, as you read to develop your thinking.

10. **Commence creative writing:** You don’t have to be a published author to write. Writing short pieces on a subject that interests or concerns you is a great way to develop your creative thinking ability. You may then feel comfortable to let your imagination wander to write a short story.

Finding ways of developing your creativity through every day experiences is a great, time efficient way of exercising the right side of your brain. Once you practice this over a period of time, it will become much easier to tap into your “creative side”.

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