

Positive Thinking

Mental Aerobics: A Key Part Of Avoiding Alzheimer's

(NAPSA)—According to the national Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease—and another 10 to 20 million are at risk of developing the condition. Fortunately, it may be possible to improve memory function and stave off Alzheimer's with the help of a few simple training techniques.

One example is the "Look, Snap, Connect" method, which exercises the brain's memory:

- **Look**—A reminder to focus your attention on what needs to be remembered.

- **Snap**—Create a visual image or mental snapshot of what needs to be remembered.

- **Connect**—Connect the mental snapshots with a story to commit to memory.

"It's important to cross-train your brain by doing regular 'mental aerobics' to improve memory skills and stimulate the brain," says Gary Small, M.D., author of three best-selling books on the subject of memory and aging. "By keeping our minds sharp, we are more inclined to stay physically fit and lead the type of healthy lifestyle that will slow down the aging process."

Game Theory

Radica, a subsidiary of Mattel, recently introduced Brain Games, an innovative handheld game that features five "brain aerobics" based on Dr. Small's research. The game features a free play mode and training mode, and includes games such as Sequence, Flash Card, Thinkfast, Word Hunt and Recall. A scoring system allows



An innovative handheld game can help people keep their minds sharp, potentially reducing the risk for Alzheimer's disease.

players to track their brain-training progress.

"Doing simple mental aerobics like those found in Brain Games can significantly improve memory skills and stimulate the brain," says Dr. Small.

In addition to brain training, Dr. Small's research shows that a few simple steps can help enhance memory power and lower one's risk for Alzheimer's. These include:

- Learning an instrument or foreign language;
- Playing board games, doing crossword puzzles or taking up a new hobby;
- Maintaining a positive attitude and cultivating healthy relationships;
- Reducing stress and emotional clutter; and
- Following a healthy diet and exercise plan.

For more information on Alzheimer's disease, visit the Alzheimer's Association Web site at www.alz.org.