

Senior Moments, now a board game... no, really

Keeping your brain active is an important task as we all get older, says **DICK LUMSDEN**

For years, we have been repeatedly told that women are skilled multi-taskers while men are barely capable of doing one thing at a time.

This view has, obviously, been peddled by women who seem to think that looking after children, running a home and holding down a job make them nothing less than superhuman.

But research now shows that, in fact, the more tasks the human brain attempts at the same time, the less well each of them is done.

Think of it as a computer, the more programs open at the same time, the slower the whole computer performs. To improve the performance of your computer, close down some applications, or put in a better, faster processor.

For us humans, we clearly can't install a better processor, so what we need to do is focus on one thing at a time, do it well and move on swiftly... which is really the position the men of the species have adopted since the dawn of time I would say.

The problem comes as we get older. We have to keep the processor, our brain, in good working order, otherwise even doing one thing well is a bit of an ask.

Before the age of the personal computer, we used to keep our brains active with crosswords, or



■ The board game Senior Moments will not be on Dick Lumsden's Christmas list this year.

Pictures: CONTRIBUTED

quizzes, making ourselves think laterally and keep dusting off the internal cobwebs.

But in recent years, as we older consumers have taken to smartphones, tablets and the digital age in rapidly increasing numbers, there has been a huge explosion in the market for online games, tests and products in the "brain training" sector.

Conservative estimates say that this market could be worth more than \$6billion globally by 2020 – with considerably more than half of that being spent by the over 50s.

There are many online sites now where you can check your brain in for a quick MOT and just make sure that the odd forgetful moment is nothing more serious.

In the interests of research this week I visited one which has a growing online reputation – American of course – and plugged my processor into their system.

The 20-minute test at www.gogniciti.com is designed specifically for people aged between 50 and 79, and is a mixture of memory, reflex and mood testing.

I'm pleased to report that the test showed 76% of people my age would have scored lower than me, and just 23% would have scored higher. I'll take

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is not a credible medical diagnosis, and I'm not saying that if you take it and score OK you are 100% healthy.

Equally, having the odd "senior moment" should not really be seen as a sign of anything out of the ordinary. We can forget things at any age, and walking into the kitchen with purpose only to forget why you went in there might just be because your processor is working harder on something more important.

Personally, I hate the term "senior moments" and one thing that will definitely not be on my Christmas list is a ridiculous board game of the same name.

Available for \$13.62 on Amazon, you can buy "Senior Moments" if you have money to waste and zero self respect.

As you work your way round the board, you can be penalised for things as random as leaving your

For as many years as I can remember (no pun intended) I have opened every working day by writing down a to do list and then working my way through it methodically. My only worry is forgetting where I put the list.

My own version of multi-tasking is typing an email, while talking on the phone and sticking my thumb up when someone in the office does a coffee run.

The upshot of all of this of course, is that as with many things in life, doing nothing with your brain is not an option.

We need to keep it stretched and feed it with new challenges and conundrums on a regular basis if we want to stay active and not slip too easily into old age.

So in that spirit, I've worked out my own test involving mathematics, memory and reflexes.

Last week's health research tells me that there are 185 calories in a large glass of white wine. I know how many bottles I have in, and I can remember where they are.

Now, how many miles do I need to cycle on my new bike each week to offset the wine intake? That'll keep my mind active. Cheers!

■ Dick Lumsden is managing director of Owl Marketing Solutions, a specialist in marketing and advertising to older consumers. If you have any views on this article, or are over 50 and would like to take part

