

WORD POWER

In a recent study, competitive Scrabble players in their 50s took on young uni students in a battle of word wizardry. Who scored? The older dictionary devotees, who left the young'uns in their wordsmith wake. Researchers believe that it's possible to develop visual-word-recognition ability in adulthood, and that it's never too late to train the adult brain. Keep your linguistic skills limber with a couple of these wordy apps:



1. JUMBLINE, \$1.99

Pump up your spelling prowess. You have to create as many words as possible from a line of letters as the clock ticks down. Find the biggest word to move up to the next level.



2. ALEXIA PREMIUM, 99 cents

Send your brain into overdrive! Create as many words as possible from a random selection of letters, which tumble down the screen like falling Tetris blocks. If you're too slow, it's game over.



3. WORD SOLITAIRE: AURORA, 99 cents

This app resembles Solitaire (the rules and layout are similar), but the cards display letters instead of numbers and suits. You stack cards to form words and expose more letters.

MORE 'YOU TIME'

Absence really does make the heart grow fonder. If you want to enjoy your time with the people you love, make sure you also spend time away from them. Adam Waytz, PhD, explains that our highly connected world leaves us "socially stuffed", hampering our ability to genuinely empathise. Periods of solitude refresh our appetite for togetherness in the same way that being hungry before a meal can make it seem more delicious.



1 in 8
The number of people who fake using a mobile phone to avoid talking to others!



NOT A SILLY QUESTION

Curiosity may have killed the proverbial cat, but being inquisitive *does* have an upside. People who ask questions perform better at new tasks, according to recent research. "We may associate questioning with small children," says study author Sophie von Stumm, PhD, "but it's actually a sign of intellectual maturity."

SLEEP ON IT

Need to take the edge off? Head to bed. Scientists at the University of California have found that a little shut-eye can shut down our stress chemistry. Our rapid-eye movement (REM) sleep, the dream phase of the night, can help soothe emotional reactions from the previous day—think of it as your overnight therapy. Find more sleep facts at preventionmag.com.au/health.