

Fluid Intelligence: What you need to know

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What is Fluid Intelligence?

[Fluid intelligence](#) refers to one's ability to reason and solve new problems without relying on prior knowledge. Fluid intelligence is important for a range of [cognitive tasks](#), and it is regarded as one of the most crucial aspects of learning.

Fluid intelligence [has a close relation to professional and educational success](#), especially in [challenging and complex environments](#). Although direct practice on fluid intelligence tests can improve performance, there is no evidence that training improves fluid intelligence in adults.

There is widespread agreement that fluid intelligence is [resistant to the influences of education and socialization](#), and that it has a strong hereditary component.

[Fluid intelligence](#) is, therefore, the ability to:

- Solve problems
- Reason
- Recognize patterns
- Adapt to your environment and the world

Origin of Fluid Intelligence Theory

["Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it's stupid."](#) Simply put, different types of intelligence exist. Some are book smart, while others are street smart, and still, others are people smart.

The intelligence quotient (IQ) was proposed to compare a person's cognitive abilities to those of others their age. A variety of factors were considered by early theorists when assessing IQ, but only one score, or IQ, was initially calculated.

[Raymond B. Cattell](#) is credited with developing the theory of fluid intelligence. The genesis is quite vague. [Cattell, in different papers, stated that it was developed in 1940, 1941, or 1942.](#) He suggested fluid intelligence is how one reason and thinks flexibly when given information.

Related: [Crystallized intelligence: Everything you need to know](#)

How does it work?

Fluid intelligence refers to a liquid that is adaptable and formless and takes on the shape of its situation. Water, for example, takes on the shape of glass when poured into it. It demonstrates how easily adaptable and quick your knowledge can process, learn, and find new solutions to a problem.



We mostly navigate the world by using our fluid intelligence as children. Why? Because our worldly knowledge is still in its infancy, there isn't enough information for you to refer to.

When a child's brain is exposed to a new environment, at this point, the brain 'doesn't have a prior point of reference about anything yet. It then uses pattern recognition to pick up bits and pieces of abstract new experiences and quickly identify relationships to solve problems on its own.

Fluid intelligence increases until adolescence and gradually declines.

Examples of Fluid Intelligence

When you first start playing a virtual reality game, you tend to explore the headset's functions and explore the environment around you. Unanticipated events occur, such as falling into a pit, being shot by another player, or losing health.



The process of how you think on the spot to problem solve, connect dots and strategize your next moves all has to do with how you observe and learn every new experience as it's happening to you.

Using your fluid intelligence is demonstrated by your ability to grasp the rules and gameplay mechanics quickly. It's almost as if it's a process that comes naturally to you.

Other times where fluid intelligence is used include: identifying patterns, finding your way in the new town or solving puzzles while coming up with new problem-solving strategies.

Related: [Fluid Intelligence versus Crystallized Intelligence](#)

How to develop fluid intelligence?

1. Try new things

We challenge our brains to work in new ways and form new neural connections when we try new things. It becomes routine once we learn how to do something. On the other hand, trying something new makes our brains work harder to learn new skills.

It's so easy to fall into a routine as an adult. Before you know it, your New Year's resolutions have been postponed until the following year. [The higher your neural plasticity](#), the more you can understand and store new information. ["Expand your cognitive horizons. Be a knowledge junkie."](#)

2. Be social

The complex relationships between humans may be one of the reasons we have such big brains in the first place. Socializing uses a lot of brainpower and grows neural connections. We have to use a range of skills from memory to empathy to develop good social relationships, which means lots of work for the brain.

[Socializing](#) helps prevent memory loss and exercises cognitive skills.

3. Think Creatively

Think of your brain as a muscle that needs to be used and exercised to stay healthy like any other muscle in your body. This requires you to think creatively and to use every part of your brain regularly.

[Creativity exercises](#) solve problems using diffuse thinking processes, allowing the brain to analyze much more information at once.

4. Push your limits

'No Pain No Gain.' We all know that to gain physical muscle, we must push ourselves outside of our comfort zones. The same can be said for our mental abilities. We must always push ourselves to our limits to continue developing our intelligence.

The brain stops making new connections once we get used to a certain way of doing things. [To keep the brain developing](#), you must move on to a more advanced level once you have mastered something.

5. Don't take the easy way out

With so much technology at our fingertips, we don't use our brains as much as previous generations. While technology can be useful, relying on spellcheck and calculators may not be the best option.

Try practicing mental maths instead of using a calculator to keep your brain challenged and fluid intelligence growing.

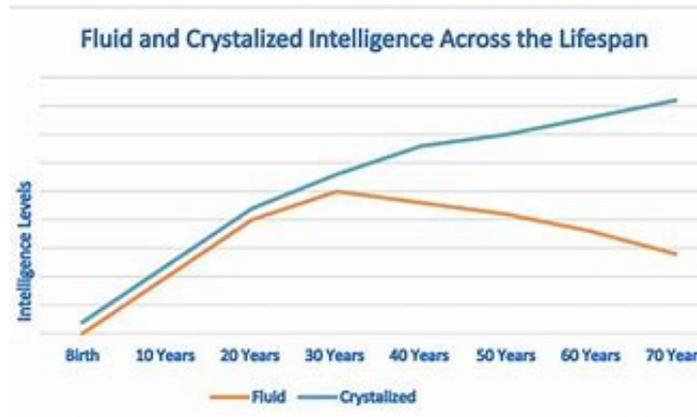
GPS devices eliminate the need to use a map or remember a mental map, and, over time, these conveniences prevent us from using our brains.

6. Stay active

Physical activity has been linked to brain development in numerous studies. Staying active has also been shown to reduce the risk of degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's.

It may seem counterintuitive, but getting out and doing something physical is one of the most important ways to improve your mental abilities.

Does fluid intelligence decrease with age?



[Fluid intelligence abilities reach a peak](#) around 20 years of age followed by a plateau between 20 and 50 years of age and ending with a drop in ability after 55 years of age.

[Fluid intelligence does, in fact, decline as we age](#), beginning in our early twenties. You can postpone the decline by solving novel complex problems regularly. However, the evidence does not suggest that you can consistently improve your fluid intelligence.

Conclusion

It is still unclear how the brain works, and many theories differ on what intelligence is and how we can improve it. However, the ideas presented above will undoubtedly challenge your grey matter, and they will undoubtedly make for a more fulfilling life.

If you are interested in knowing how good your fluid intelligence is, follow the link below for a quick quiz:

[Fluid Intelligence Test Questions And Answers - ProProfs Quiz](#)

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