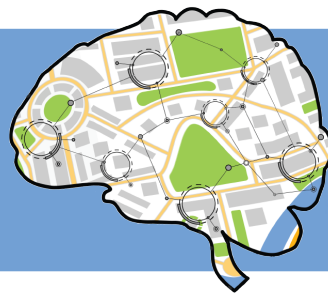


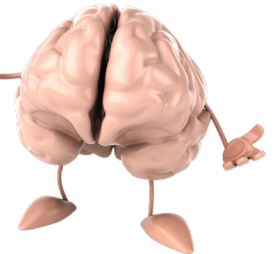
# Impulse Control Skills Activity Guide Grade 6-12



# Know Your *Neuro*

## Quiz Questions

1. What is impulse-control? Answer: The ability to control your behavior regardless of what you are thinking or feeling.
2. What part of the brain has been nicknamed your accelerator? Answer: The limbic system.
3. What organ inside the limbic system is known for seeking new things to make you feel good? Answer: The nucleus accumbens or the 'gas pedal'.
4. What part of the brain is known as the 'brakes' and controls impulses? Answer: The frontal lobe.
5. Why are adolescents more sensitive to new or novel things than adults? Answer: Adolescents go through an identity development phase when they need to try on a lot of new things to discover who they are.
6. According to research, what is the #1 predictor of adult success? Answer: Self-control.
7. In the marshmallow test, the kids who ate their first marshmallow without delaying for the second had more of what as teens and adults? Answer: Substance use, alcohol problems, eating disorders, juvenile delinquency, less able to save money, and less able to meet long-term goals.
8. How many seconds does it take for an urge to subside? Answer: About 4 seconds.
9. The technique that includes taking three deep breaths to wait for an urge to subside is called? Answer: Urge surfing.



## Activities

### *Honest Moments*

Ask students to divide into pairs or small groups. Ask them to identify situations that are the most difficult to control their impulses in. Challenge them to discuss why with their peers.

### *Brainstorm*

Keep students in the same pairs or groups as above, or do this activity as a whole class. Give students two minutes to think of as many tools to control impulses as they can. Decide which one is the funniest.

### *Risky Behavior*

Keep students in the same pairs or groups as above, or do this activity as a whole class. Ask students to discuss how drugs, alcohol, or mood problems affect impulse control.

### *Marshmallow Test*

Watch the video about the Stanford University marshmallow test in class. Ask students to look for impulse control techniques and make note of how many they saw the kids use. Discuss.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX\\_oy9614HQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ)

As teens and adults, the kids who delayed longer on the marshmallow test:

- had more self-control when frustrated
- met more long-term goals
- made better diet choices
- had more satisfying relationships
- saved more money

### *To My Adult Self*

Knowing that self-control is the number one predictor of adult success, ask students to write a letter to themselves when they are 25 years old describing what they want to achieve by then.

### *Discussion Questions*

- On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best, rate your impulse control skills.
- How well do you reflect and predict the consequences of your behavior?
- Does being around certain peers affect your impulse control? Why?
- How does lack of sleep or food affect your self-control?
- When have you reacted impulsively and what were the consequences?
- What is your self-talk when you are trying to control an impulse? Does your self-talk increase or decrease your self-control? Why?
- What is your favorite technique for controlling your impulse to eat unhealthy food? Engage in risky behavior? Say inappropriate things? Yell at someone?