**Six Surprising Benefits of Speaking Two Languages**

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*As anyone who speaks multiple languages knows, a new language is an open door into different cultures, foods, and customs. And it turns out it’s good for your mind, your decision-making skills and your job prospects, too!*

**1) Protects Your Brain As You Age**

Studies suggest that being fluent in two languages can significantly delay the onset of dementia or Alzheimer’s symptoms in older adults. “Being bilingual is like a constant mental exercise for your brain,” explains Viorica Marian, Department Chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Northwestern University. “It keeps your brain healthy and agile longer.”

**2) Makes You Better At Switching Tasks**

A bilingual brain might speak English in the office and Spanish at home, and this experience can make them better at alternating between other everyday responsibilities, too. :They’re better at task switching, because they have a lot of experience switching between languages,” Viorica says.

**3) Improves Your Ability to Focus**

Bilinguals constantly suppress one language as they speak or read the other, which translates to better concentration. “Any task we do, we must be able to focus on what’s important and ignore what’s not important,” says Viorica. “This ability to focus on what matters is something that bilinguals get better at.”

**4) Gives You the Ability to Make Better Decisions**

“Some decisions can be very emotionally charged,” Viorica says. “It’s been found that by switching into another language, bilinguals can minimize that influence of emotion and make much more rational decisions.” This might help you make a better choice on a major purchase or aid in dealing with a tricky situation at work.

**5) Opens Up More Job Opportunities**

If you compare two people with similar backgrounds, the bilingual one enjoys better career prospects. “They have more employment opportunities, especially in this international economy,” Viorica says. Bilingualism can lead to everything from higher salaries to more promotions.

**6) Means It’s Easier to Learn a Third Language**

Already fluent in two different languages? Try mastering a third – or fourth! “Bilinguals are better at learning new langauges,” Viorica says. “Witn each additional language, it becomes easier to learn.”