Why you’re never too old to learn
The benefits of adult learning for your career

- Gives you the qualifications needed to enter a new profession, enabling you to achieve your career goals
- Increases job satisfaction by opening up professional opportunities, such as promotions that may not have been available to you before
- Provides you with up-to-date knowledge, which can make you more valuable to employers
- Boosts your earning potential by increasing your chances of getting better paid jobs
The benefits of adult learning for your confidence

- Gives you the confidence to solve problems and make decisions independently
- Helps you to discover that you're good at new things, which can increase your self-esteem
- Learning is a process of self-improvement that will allow you to overcome challenges and realise your capabilities
The benefits of adult learning for your health

- The exercise of learning stimulates the brain, helping to keep your mind sharp and contributing to good mental health in later life.
- Studies have shown that adult learning can help reduce symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety.
- There is evidence to suggest that staying mentally active as adults, for example by teaching yourself a foreign language or partaking in an education course, can help to reduce the risk of dementia.
Many adults buy into the myth that their academic abilities have diminished over time and they are too old to learn something new.

You can’t teach an old dog new tricks

Adults are generally more self-conscious than children and fear making mistakes.

I don’t want to be embarrassed

People who struggled at school often feel that they won’t succeed if they return to education.

I didn’t succeed at school
People often become less open minded as they age and are more resistant to change. 'I'm too set in my ways' ‘There are no benefits to learning now’

Many adults feel they have limited time due to work or personal responsibilities, such as bringing up kids, household chores, etc.

People often become less open minded as they age and are more resistant to change.

Many adults are reluctant to learn because they feel that it will not be relevant or add any value to their work or personal lives.
Myths

● Our brains become fixed structures when we get older and we cannot easily adapt to learning new things.

● The Critical Period Hypothesis (Eric Lenneberg, 1967) proposed that there was a crucial period an individual had before their brain lost its ‘plasticity’, making it impossible to fully learn a language after puberty.

● Our intelligence and academic abilities diminish as we age.

Facts

● While it's true that children have more 'flexible' brains and can soak up information more easily, it's never too late to learn. The brain is a dynamic structure that can adapt to new experiences throughout life, and this can actually be enhanced by regularly challenging the mind in different ways.

● This theory has been widely criticised by psychologists and language experts. Recent studies have shown that although there are differences between how an adult and a child learns a second language, maturity can actually be an asset in learning.

● After the 1960s, studies found that adult intelligence remains fairly stable until old age and declines at a much slower rate than experts first thought.
Myths

- Adult learners find too much variety a distraction.
- All adults prefer autonomous learning.
- Adults learn best when listening to a teacher.

Facts

- A variety in learning increases the success of acquiring knowledge. Just like children, adults benefit from using a range of different learning techniques.
- Although generally more self-directed than children, many adults require guidance and support from teachers and peers throughout their studies.
- The 'Andragogy' theory (Malcolm Knowles, 1970) proposed that adults prefer practical learning and hands-on problem solving. However, there really is no 'best' way to learn. In fact, many people find a combination of passive learning and active participation to be most effective.
Tips for adult learners

Make the learning experience as relevant and useful as possible. Draw on your personal experiences and link the subject matter to real world benefits for your work and/or personal life.
Make learning as engaging as possible to boost motivation. Use a variety of learning stimuli, such as images, activities, videos, lectures and podcasts to find what works for you.

Breaking down information into bite-sized chunks can also help to make it easier to process, and don’t forget to take regular breaks to help you maintain concentration.
Tips for adult learners

Master your skills by playing an active role in your learning experience. Exploring the subject matter through self-study and active participation can help you to learn in a way that is meaningful to you.
Tips for adult learners

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Let learning occur through mistakes. Trial and error can make the learning experience more effective, while the sense of overcoming a challenge can help to boost confidence.
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