

Healthy Aging and the Surprising Benefits of Play

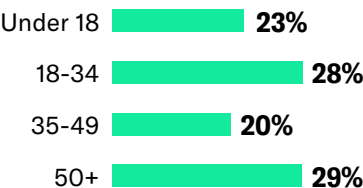
A growing number of video game players are age 50 and older. Americans have discovered the power of play and are powering up games to exercise their brains, keep their minds sharp, and stay connected with family and friends.

1

Older players are highly engaged with video games.

Ages of Players

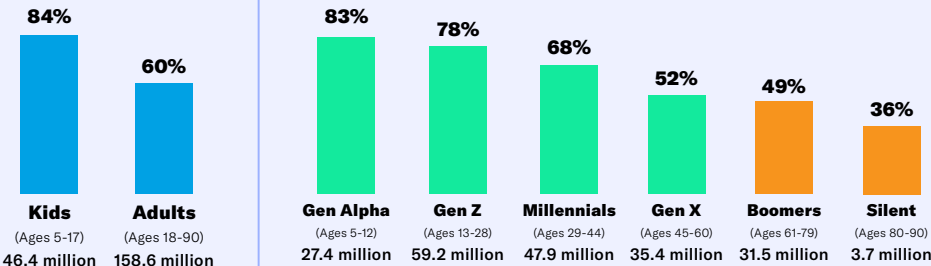
Among total players ages 5-90



More adults are joining in on the fun than ever before. Of the 205.1 million video game players in the U.S., more players are age 50+ (**29%**) than under 18 (**23%**).

This is a remarkable increase from 1999, when only **9%** of players were aged 50+.





Percentage of Americans Who Play Video Games 1+ Hour Per Week (Any platform)



2

Older players recognize and value the benefits of video games.

Players from the Boomer and Silent Generations play to pass the time and have fun like younger players, but older players especially appreciate how games **provide mental stimulation, improve cognitive skills, and help keep their minds sharp.**

Benefits of playing video games		Boomers/ Silent Generation	
	Providing mental stimulation	79%	<div></div>
	Bringing joy through play	76%	<div></div>
	Improving cognitive skills	76%	<div></div>
	Providing stress relief	75%	<div></div>

The top three reasons people age 65+ play video games:



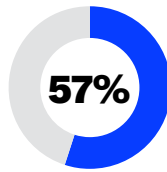
79%
Pass the time
or relax



68%
Keep their
minds sharp



49%
To have fun



57% of players age 65+ agree that video games can introduce people to new friends/relationships.

3

Research confirms video games offer valuable health benefits to older players.

Multiple studies show that video games can offer lasting and significant relief for older players as treatment for the effects of aging.

For example:

- A study published in 2024 concluded that, “Playing video games thrice a week for 12 weeks can improve **cognitive performance and problem-solving ability** in the elderly with mild cognitive impairment.”ⁱ
- A comprehensive literature review of in the journal Brain Sciences showed that, “...older subjects trained with video games showed a **significant improvement in cognitive functions, sleep quality, and psychiatric symptoms**, positioning video games as an intriguing and useful tool.”ⁱⁱ
- Players benefit from the positive effects of games, regardless of age. A 2020 study of 11,000+ players age 18 and older, across 29 different countries, “corroborates what qualitative research and reports from video game players around the world have long suggested: **People feel good playing games.**”ⁱⁱⁱ

Sources

i [Effect of Video Games on Cognitive Performance and Problem-Solving Ability in the Aged with Cognitive Dysfunction: A Randomized Clinical Trial](#)

ii [Video Gaming in Older People: What Are the Implications for Cognitive Functions?](#)

iii [Affective Uplift During Video Game Play: A Naturalistic Case Study](#)

All other data cited is from the ESA 2025 Essential Facts About the U.S. Video Game Industry Report.