**A Brief Introduction to Nootropics – For Enhanced Brain Power**

If you are at all interested in maximizing your ability to work productively and to increase the quality and quantity of your work by looking at your own biology, then chances are you will have come across the term nootropics.

Nootropics are also known as 'smart drugs' – and they do exactly what they say on the tin. A smart drug is any supplement, drug or nutrient that is designed to increase your brain power by enhancing focus, concentration, creativity or some other aspect of cognitive ability.

Basically then, it's like the film *Limitless* but in real life. And reportedly, more and more people are using them. But how do you use them and do they really work?

**Modafinil, Piracetam and Phenibut**

If you look for nootropics online, the majority of information is going to be on the likes of modafinil, Piracetam and phenibut. You may also find some information on caffeine, on Adderall and on l-theanine.

The role of most of these nootropics is to increase specific neurotransmitters in the brain – such as dopamine which modulates our focus, concentration and memory. This is how l-theanine and modafinil work. The precise mechanisms of action of Piracetam meanwhile are not fully known, though we do know that it increases sensitivity to acetylcholine. Phenibut increases GABA which makes us more relaxed – useful for interacting in stressful situations.

Should you use these nootropics? No. Not only are we not fully aware of the long-term side effects but we also don't fully understand the mechanisms of action. Not to mention some of them are addictive and may even alter our normal brain chemistry in dangerous ways, leading to addiction and a myriad of other complications.

The point is, our brain creates the concoction of neurotransmitters it does for a reason – we shouldn't 'discriminate' against some neurotransmitters but instead aim to support our brain's overall health.

**The Alternative**

Fortunately, the better kinds of nootropics do precisely that and enable us to keep our brains healthy, energized and hardy. These include the likes of creatine (which improves our brain's ability to utilize ATP for energy), MCT oil (which provides the white matter with ketones), amino acids (from which all of our neurotransmitters are made), omega 3 fatty acid (which increases cell membrane permeability) etc.

Combine these supplements with a generally healthy routine, good sleep and a great diet and you will see far greater cognitive benefits than you would from creating a neurochemical imbalance.