

THE PROACTIVE

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Brain Health

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Keep Your Brain Healthy: 6 Pillars of Brain Health

Leading an active, healthy lifestyle is important to keeping your brain healthy, and reducing your risk of brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and Dementia. About 3 out of 5 Americans will develop a brain disease in their lifetime, and declines of the brain start as early as age 20*. While genes play a major role in brain health, researchers have found by following these lifestyle choices, you can slow, prevent, and even reverse negative effects on the brain.

Physical Exercise

Physical exercise helps lower risk of Alzheimer's Disease and improves blood flow and memory which help enhance learning, mood, and thinking by stimulating chemical changes in the brain.



- Aim for 30 mins of aerobic exercise 5 times a week.
- Include balance and coordination exercises.

Sleep & Relaxation

Beta-amyloid plaque is an abnormal protein that builds up in the brain and is associated with Alzheimer's. Sleep energizes you, improves mood, and reduces the build-up of the protein. Meditation also helps reduce age-related decline of the brain.

- Create a regular sleep schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime ritual, such as taking a bath or writing in a journal before you go to sleep.

Food & Nutrition

Your brain is exposed to harmful stress as you get older due to lifestyle and environmental factors, which causes oxidation in the brain. Foods with antioxidants help reduce the harmful effects of oxidation on the brain.



- Eat across the rainbow; a wide variety of fruits and vegetables provides healthy antioxidants.
- Try to eat 4-6 small meals, rather than 3 large ones to keep consistent blood sugar levels.

Medical Health

Diabetes, obesity, depression, high cholesterol, and smoking all increase risk of Dementia. Control and reduce these risks by seeing your doctor and taking proper medications.

Social Interaction

Research has shown that those who have the most social interactions have the slowest rate of memory loss.



- Spend time with family engaging in stimulating conversation.
- Join clubs, volunteer, or have weekly visits with friends.

Mental Fitness

Exercising your brain is just as important as exercising your body. Mental fitness improves brain function, promotes the growth of new brain cells, and helps reduce the risk of developing Dementia.

- Learn something new, play strategy games, or do puzzles to keep the brain active.
- Engage in daily relaxation activities, such as meditation or breathing exercises.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE BRAIN

- The brain contains 100 billion neurons.
- 75% of the brain is made up of water.
- The adult brain weighs about 3 pounds.
- The brain uses 20% of the oxygen in your body.
- The scientific name for a brain freeze is "sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia."
- There are successful signs of brain surgery going back as far as the Stone Age.

*www.heart.org