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brain training

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Ways to Boost Your Brain Health

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1. **Drink Water!** Your brain is 75% water. If it is dehydrated it is not working at its fullest capacity. Warm or neutral water is best but if you love it ice cold, that's okay, too. Giving it a little flavor, like a squeeze of lemon (which is good for your kidneys) may help you drink more. Start your day with a big glass of water...before your coffee or tea. Carry water with you everywhere. Notice the color of your urine. It should be a light yellow.
2. **Move your body/Use your senses.** Movement increases blood flow and triggers the production of neuro chemicals that stimulates brain cells. Sitting for extended periods of time results in minimal blood flow. So, stand up, stretch, go for a walk, or take that new dance class you have been thinking about. Clench and unclench your right fist when trying to remember a word. Pace or toss a ball when using rote memory. Close your eyes to try to remember. Tune up your senses. Practice smelling different smells. Get your eyes and ears checked regularly. Put on your favorite music and dance! Practice balance.
3. **Take a deep breath (or two).** Your brain uses 20% of all the oxygen you breathe in. Practice slowing down, mindfully inhale. Breathe deep from your diaphragm, in through your nose, hold for five, and breathe out through your mouth, blowing out as much air as you can. Take it slow, close your eyes, and focus on your brain. Mindfulness will lower your stress and help your memory and focus. Add it to your routine as much as possible. Take breaks, meditate to help lower blood pressure, lower stress and to focus. Take a deep breath when trying to remember something or trying a challenging task.
4. **Socialize/Community.** Human beings thrive when engaged with other living things. Stay connected with your family and friends. Call or write a long lost friend. Talk with people or join group activities. Volunteer. Be with animals. Go out into nature. Tend to a plant or garden. **Volunteer!** Visit with people of other ages than your own. Join STEP – Sharing teens and Elders Project, a multi-generational program. Tell your story and listen.
5. **Challenge yourself mentally.** Mental challenge builds new pathways in your brain. Yes, you can change your brain! Engage in lifelong learning and build a “cognitive reserve” that can help against decline. Do a new puzzle, learn a language, play an instrument. Take a brain class (hint, hint). Studies show that targeted brain exercises can have effects on your

mental health for 10 years or more. Try new experiences and step out of your comfort level. Find little ways to “change up” your brain’s routine. If you can’t think of anything else while you are doing a particular activity, it is “cognitively stimulating”. Practice remembering people’s names. Read words backwards or upside down.

6. **Eat healthier and maintain a healthy weight.** Your gut and brain are directly related. [Follow a Mediterranean Diet!](#) Eat more fish or take Fish, Flax or Krill oil to boost your Omega 3 intake. Eat a largely plant based diet. Avoid processed foods. Add high antioxidant foods to your diet like nuts, berries, plums, and beans. Use olive oil or coconut oil. Add turmeric to your diet. Keep honey and cinnamon in stock and use it. Make meat a treat. Use probiotics. Eat clean non-GMO organic foods as much as possible. Eat food cooked with love. Take supplements like Vitamin D. Make use of fresh herbs – rosemary is especially good for memory.
7. **Think positively!** Count your blessings. Try to look at situations from another point of view – the big picture. Do the things that make you happy. Work on changing your self-perception by saying positive things about YOU! Practicing the power of positive thinking and gain confidence. Smile. Laugh! It’s really the best medicine. When you think of a negative try to balance it with a positive. Discover and maintain your personal spirituality.
8. **Monitor your brain.** Stay aware of when you are feeling “fuzzy”. Are you on new medication? Certain medications make it harder to remember. When are you feeling sharpest? What time of day is it? What did you eat? How was your sleep? Take note when you are feeling particularly sharp and ask yourself what is different. What is your body’s rhythm? Are you a morning person or a night owl? Prioritize your day while your brain is at peak operating power. Be prepared to experience thinking shortcomings when experiencing changes or grief.
9. **Get good nights sleep.** Unplug the TV and computer long before you go to bed. Take a warm bath, drink some herbal tea. And always welcome a short intentional nap – no longer than 20 minutes if you can work it into your schedule. Add magnesium to your supplements. Memory is enhanced by mental rest. Your brain thinks the most during sleep and clears itself. Sleep is VERY important for best memory and thinking skills.
10. **Detox.** Coconut oil pull to detox your mouth. Dry brush your skin. Avoid loud noises and toxic smells. Avoid people that bring you down. Use steam, hot tubs and dry sauna to “sweat it out”. Learn about detoxing juices and diets with the guidance of a health professional. Eliminate chemical scents like room fresheners.
11. **Be the boss of your brain.** Information about the brain is everywhere. Read as much as you can about your brain. Take care of your “command central”. Your brain takes care of everything in your body. Own and feed your brain. Make it a habit! Know your own learning style. Keep a mental toolbox of techniques to help you remember. Avoid falls to protect your head. CELEBRATE WHAT YOU REMEMBER!