



You Can! Love Your Brain!



Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body. Start now. It's never too late or too early to incorporate healthy habits.

Ten Ways to Love your Brain

1. **Break a sweat** - Regular cardiovascular exercise elevates your heart rate and increases blood flow. Studies have found an association between physical activity and reduced risk of cognitive decline.
2. **Hit the books** - Formal education in any stage of life will help reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Take a class at a local college, community center or online.
3. **Butt out** - Evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels comparable to those who have not smoked.
4. **Follow your heart** - Evidence shows that risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke - obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes - negatively impact your cognitive health. Take care of your heart, and your brain just might follow.
5. **Heads up!** - Brain injury can raise your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt, use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike, and take steps to prevent falls.
6. **Fuel up right** - Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Mediterranean-type diets may contribute to risk reduction.
7. **Catch some Zzz's** - Not getting enough sleep due to conditions like insomnia or sleep apnea may result in problems with memory and thinking.
8. **Take care of your mental health** - If you have a history of depression with increased risk of cognitive decline, seek medical treatment if you have symptoms of depression, anxiety or other mental health concerns. Also, try to manage stress.
9. **Buddy up** - Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your local community.
10. **Stump yourself** - Challenge and activate your mind. Play games, such as bridge, that make you think strategically. Challenging your mind may have short and long-term benefits for your brain.

Adapted from: www.alz.org/help-support/brain_health/10_ways_to_love_your_brain

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