

# Brain Health

## BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS



### Eat a Brain Healthy Diet

#### FOOD IS MEDICINE

**Eat:** vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, seeds, potatoes, whole grains, herbs/spices, fish, seafood, extra virgin olive oil

**Eat in moderation:** poultry, eggs, cheese, yogurt

**Eat only rarely:** red meat

**Avoid:** sugar-sweetened beverages, added sugars, trans fats, processed meat, refined grains, refined oils, highly processed foods

#### DIET OPTIONS

**Gluten Free Diet:** gluten causes inflammation in the gut, causing toxic bowel contents into circulation which eventually reaches the brain – causing inflammation in the brain.

**Low Carbohydrate Diet:** carbohydrates are the true villain causing arterial disease in brain and heart, not cholesterol!

**Mediterranean Diet:** reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, inflammation in body, and improves blood vessel function. The diet has been associated with a lower level the “bad” cholesterol that’s more likely to build up deposits in your arteries.



### Complete Aerobic Exercise

Improves cardiovascular fitness, circulation, heart, lung capacity, mood, weight management, HDL “good” cholesterol, and promotes better sleep.

Reduces blood pressure and LDL “bad” cholesterol.

**Examples:** Running, Jump Rope, Swimming, Cycling, Zumba, Kick-Boxing and Elliptical

**Goal:** Get heart rate up for 30 minutes a day, to get your blood pumping.



### Complete Isometric Exercise

Helps heal from injury, retains muscle tone, boosts energy, and releases endorphins into body.

Reduces painful joints, relieves tense muscles, and lowers blood pressure.

**Examples:** Plank, Side Plank, Low Squat, Split Squat, Wall Sit and Glute Bridge

**Goal:** Convenience - Can be done without equipment.

*Injury prevention - Strength muscles around joint without moving joint itself.*

*Exercise Technique - Build mind-muscle connection and help add motion to exercise.*



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## Complete Brain Exercise

Learn new things which may have short and long-term benefits by building new pathways in your brain.

**Examples:**

- Complete puzzles (Sudoku, Crosswords, Word finds)
- Educational reading
- Technology Apps to strengthen your brain: Luminosity, Brain HQ
- New skills/hobbies
- Learn to play an instrument



## Practice Mindfulness

Being intentional with your time.

Being aware and accepting of thoughts, feelings, emotions.

**Examples:**

- Yoga
- Gratitude journals
- Meditation
- Spirituality
- Sit quietly and focus on now, not the past or the future
- Judgment free zone for yourself to "just be"



## Remain Socially Active

Remaining active in your community is beneficial in sustaining your overall health by reduced rates of disability, mortality, and depression, and provides a great connection to others.

**Examples:**

- Nurture your social network by maintaining close personal relationships
- If you love animals, consider volunteering at a local shelter
- Participate in a club (book club, spiritual group, walking group, art-centric club, ethnic club)



## Get Quality Sleep & Rest

Sleep is essential to boost memory, increase capacity, help build muscle, control weight, improve insulin sensitivity, shrink risk of heart disease, and improve immune function.

The average adult needs 8 hours of qualitative, restorative sleep per night.

Possible modifications to support sleep:

- Limit naps to no more than 20-30 minutes
- Avoid stimulants (caffeine & nicotine) and Alcohol close to bedtime
- Exercise daily, avoid workouts close to bedtime
- Establish a nighttime routine (warm shower/bath, read a book, light stretching)
- Regular mealtimes; avoid heavy food close to bedtime
- Adapt sleep environment (temperature, light, sound, bedding)



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