

Brain Health For Boomers

Written by
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Brain health has always been fascinating to me. I've studied it in earning my degrees. I've taught it at the college level. I read everything I can – books, articles, programs! When my mother developed Alzheimer's I became even more passionate in learning all I could about how we could make the most of our brains.

What we are focusing on in this report is how you can be proactive in optimizing our brain so that you can avoid Alzheimer's. And what is great about all of these tips is that they also can boost your productivity drastically by following them!

Keeping up with both your physical and mental exercise is the best way to keep your brain young. Mental exercise helps your brain maintain and make new connections. *New York Times* had a front-page story at the Bridge Table Clues to Elusive Old Age and they did a study that showed how playing Bridge and other games keeps minds sharp well into their 80's and 90's. And playing games such as Bridge can be an important part of self-care it provides excellent socialization as well as exercising the brain.

Learning how to do anything new is also mentally stimulating and it carries over into all our activities in daily life. A friend of mine had a mild stroke and her doctor suggested the Nintendo brain games. One of them is Brain Age and the one I prefer is Brain Challenge. I have found that they really have sharpened my reaction time and forced me to focus in a way that's different from what I don't normally do in our day-to-day life.

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Along with the mental exercise you've got to be sure to give your cardiovascular system a good workout as often as possible. Anything that benefits your heart and lungs is a huge support for your brain. Your brain gets nourishment from a flow of nutrients and oxygen through your circulatory system so when you exercise more often; the flow increases in our brain and your memory benefits tremendously.

Physical exercise boosts the blood flow to the brain, improves the oxygen supply and helps the brain use glucose more efficiently. And it helps protect the brain from molecules that hurt it such as free radicals. Physical exercise is said to be the most definite support to your brain function. We know this because of the mechanics of how exercise moves everything through your brain.

Particularly helpful in creating more connections in our brain is physical exercise that involves concentration to follow new moves. This stimulates a creation of new neural pathways. You could try some dance classes or some kind of new sport.

If you do workout classes in the water, it's easy on your joints and it gives you a great cardio boost and stimulates the brain with the new moves you learn each class.

I find that exercise keeps me mentally sharp and creative during the day as well as giving me the cardiovascular benefit. I also enjoy yoga and do other fitness machines. It takes me out of my head and into my body and allows creativity to flow through me when I'm doing various activities. To me I call it my recess time when I go to workout.

If you are one of the people who say that you hate to exercise-if it's not recess time for you-think about anything that you enjoyed in your past that you really enjoyed. What activity could you adapt to do now wherever you are?

One thing you might try is just putting on some music that you love and just move with it in the privacy of your home. And you'll get your heart and lungs moving. That can really elevate your mood and your energy level.

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I've realized that during the day I need to get up and move around, either just to do some fast walking or do a little bit of housework that's active. I recently adopted a little dog from the Humane Society who loves to play hide and seek in the house. So I get little treats and I run from one end of the house to the other. That gets my heart going and also gives him some exercise. I say physical exercise is as important to me as my vitamin pills. Without it, my mood is down. I'm not as productive. I just don't have the energy that I do when I have been exercising.

Let's look at another area, supplements that can be helpful. There are lots of antioxidants and vitamins that can be helpful and some of these may be new to you and some are probably very familiar to you.

The first one is turmeric, a spice that's used a lot in India. What they are finding is that there's an elevated level of something called the APO E4 protein associated with Alzheimer's. You can lower the activity of that E4 gene and allow the rest of the APLET to clear your power lines if you eat turmeric. Turmeric is found in a lot of Indian foods and also in capsule form.

Vitamin B is essential. Without B vitamins your brain neurotransmitters do not work efficiently. And to make it worse without having the B vitamins your homocysteine levels rise and that doubles the risk of developing Alzheimer's. Homocysteine is an amino acid associated with stroke, heart disease and Alzheimer's.

Replace your table salt with sea salt to eliminate the aluminum used to process regular table salt to make it flow better. It's still questionable whether aluminum is an important part of the development of Alzheimer's. They do know that the neural tangles that are associated with Alzheimer's disease do contain aluminum. So that makes aluminum suspicious and it is better to avoid it.

Vitamin E is a very good protection against Alzheimer's. People consuming the highest amount of vitamin E are 43% less likely to get Alzheimer's, according to studies. You can get vitamin E by eating just 3 ounces of nuts or seeds a day.

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Melatonin, a supplement generally used to help with sleep, can actually guard the nervous system against Alzheimer's disease and stroke, two degenerative diseases. It's also found to prevent debilitating migraines suffered by some individuals. The naturally produced melatonin really declines as we age so it's important to supplement older adults to enhance that protection against the condition associated with oxidative stress, oxidative stress particularly neural degenerative diseases.

Another thing that I've been taking for years is Omega 3 DHA. They have seen the dietary deficiency showing up very frequently in Alzheimer's patients is the lack of the Omega 3 oils. Omega 3 fatty acids are known to reduce inflammation and that is why they are so important.

The Omega 3 fatty acids are also beneficial because they provide fluidity to cell membranes and they improve communications between the brain cells. A lot of the problem with Omega3 is that with all the way food is processed now and the ways that animals are raised, that most of the Omega 3 fatty acids have been removed from our foods. Some people have eliminated eggs and they are really a good source. So you can do either the fish oils or you can see flax seed if it's ground or flax oil. Make certain that the fish oil capsules you use are molecularly distilled or what is called pharmacy grade.

Drinking plenty of water is critical for the health of our brain. Our brain is primarily water so if we are starting to get thirsty, we are already dehydrated and our brain is suffering from not having enough fluid in there to keep nutrients moving to the brain.

Our next area is food. You want to do your best to choose food that is premium fuel for your body. You are what you eat. Many people don't realize that all of your cells renew themselves every five months so diet is an important part of having those cells grow helpfully.

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Your diet should be high in the Omega 3 fatty acids, fish, fish oil, walnuts, avocados and antioxidants, all kinds of vegetables. The best antioxidants foods and vegetables according to the US Department of Agriculture are prunes, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, spinach, and raspberries.

Other great antioxidants are brussel sprouts, plums, broccoli, beets, avocados, oranges, red grapes, red bell peppers, cherries and kiwis. Now if you think about all of these, you'll realize they are all very colorful. With our colorful fruits and vegetables we have very strong antioxidants. Make sure that you get plenty of fruits and vegetables. Choose food that's closest to nature. The less processed food and extra chemicals that you put into your body the better off you are going to be.

It's important to monitor your blood pressure since your blood feeds your brain nutrients. Your goal is to keep your arteries clear and flowing so that that flow of nutrients to the brain is as good as possible. Reducing your high blood pressure to normal can improve cognitive function and it can slow Alzheimer's progression substantially. So if your blood pressure is a little high, find out ways that you can lower it. I think all of you know salt and sugar help to create higher blood pressure. You need to check with your doctor to find a way to control your blood pressure because of the effect it has on your brain.

I know I've gone over a lot of material and it may seem a bit overwhelming when you think of it all at once. But if you can just start somewhere and keep adding good habits that will help you to be brain healthy. You are going to see a big difference.

Just add one strategy at a time, make a good choice each time you choose a food. Is this or that better for my brain? Did I exercise enough to get that blood moving into my brain?

Lots of water, lots of exercise, great food, good supplements! Make some good choices and you'll see that it's going to make a difference in how you feel and it's going to feel good that you are doing the best for yourself to avoid later problems.

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If you're serious about improving your brain health, you have a great opportunity to get started in a three-part teleseminar course starting November 17, 2010. Check out all the details here: <http://www.eteletours.com/brainhealth.html>



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I look forward to working together to make some positive changes in your life. The second and third classes are in December. Get ready for a focused, creative, productive 2011 with the new support you're giving your brain!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Suzanne Holman is a speaker, writer, and consultant who works with professionals over 50 who are intentional about having the best life possible. Suzanne supports them with strategies for optimizing their brain, staying on course with their goals, and living with gusto. She has particular interest in supporting those who have a loved one with Alzheimer's disease.