

# healthy living for your brain and body

## tips from the latest research



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## Program overview

- Identify the reasons for taking care of yourself as you age
- List strategies to age well in the following areas:
  - Physical health and exercise
  - Diet and nutrition
  - Cognitive activity
  - Social engagement
- Make your own plan for healthy aging using the *Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research* workbook

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## Aging and health

- Aging well depends on your:
  - Genes
  - Environment
  - Lifestyle
- Lifestyle choices may help keep your body and brain healthy



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## healthy for your brain and body

### The brain and how it works



- The brain is the control center of the body
- There are 100 billion nerve cells, or neurons, creating a branching network
- Signals traveling through the brain form memories, thoughts and feelings
- Alzheimer's disease destroys brain cells

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## healthy for your brain and body

### Heart-brain connection

- Heart and brain are interrelated
  - What you do to protect your heart can also help your brain continue to operate at its best
- The brain needs blood flow
  - The brain depends on oxygen and adequate blood flow to work well
  - 25% of blood from every heartbeat goes to the brain

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## healthy for your brain and body

### Dementia and Alzheimer's

- Dementia is caused by many different diseases and conditions
- It is not part of normal aging
- Alzheimer's disease is most common cause of dementia
- Known risks for Alzheimer's includes age, genetics, head injury, cardiovascular factors and fewer years of formal education
- Therapies for Alzheimer's can treat symptoms, but cannot cure, prevent or even slow disease progression

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## Taking care of yourself as you age



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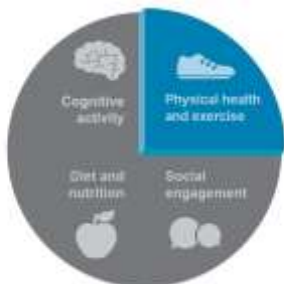
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## Physical health and exercise



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## Physical health and exercise

### What we know

- Cardiovascular activity may reduce your risk of cognitive decline
- Regular and vigorous exercise leads to increased blood flow – other physical activities may also yield benefits
- There is no single recipe

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Woodley discusses developing exercise as a habit in his life.

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### Physical health and exercise

**What we can do**

- Do something you like
- Start out small
- Move safely
- Get your heart rate up
- Ask friends to join you
- Check with your doctor before you start



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### Physical health and exercise



**What we can do**

- Stop smoking
- Avoid excess alcohol
- Get adequate sleep
- Avoid head injury
- Manage stress
- Treat depression
- Visit your doctor regularly

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## Physical health and exercise

### What we can do

Monitor numbers and take action

- Blood pressure
- Blood sugar
- Weight
- Cholesterol



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## Diet and nutrition



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## Diet and nutrition

### What we know

- What's good for the heart may also be good for the brain
- Nutritious food is fuel for the brain
- Following some dietary guidelines can reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, stroke and diabetes

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Martha Clare Morris, Sc.D., is the Director of the Section of Nutrition and Epidemiology in the Department of Internal Medicine at Rush University.

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### Diet and nutrition

**What we can do**

<p><b>EAT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetables</li> <li>• Fruits</li> <li>• Nuts, beans and whole grains</li> <li>• Lean meats, fish and poultry</li> <li>• Vegetable oils</li> </ul>	<p><b>AVOID</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saturated/trans fats</li> <li>• Processed foods</li> <li>• Solid fat, sugar and salt</li> <li>• Deep-fried foods</li> <li>• Unhealthy fast foods</li> </ul>
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### Diet and nutrition

**What we can do**

- Consult reputable sources about:
  - Dietary supplements
  - Vitamins
- Work with your doctor



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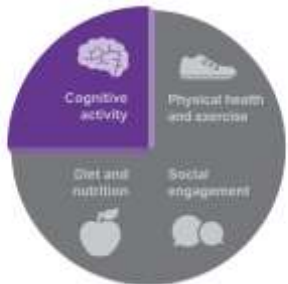
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## Cognitive activity



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## Cognitive activity

**What we know**

- Keeping your mind active forms new connections among brain cells
- Cognitive activity encourages blood flow to the brain
- Mentally stimulating activities may possibly maintain or even improve cognition
- Engaging in formal education will keep your brain healthy and can provide protection against developing dementia

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David Bennett, MD, is the Director of the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center in Chicago.

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## healthy for your brain and body Cognitive activity

### What we can do

- Read books and articles that challenge and inspire you
- Complete puzzles and play games that are challenging for you
- Learn new skills or hobbies
- Engage in ongoing learning



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## healthy for your brain and body Social engagement



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## healthy for your brain and body Social engagement

### What we know

- Social engagement is associated with living longer with fewer disabilities
- Staying engaged in the community offers you an opportunity to maintain your skills
- Remaining both socially and mentally active may support brain health and possibly delay the onset of dementia

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## healthy living for your brain and body

### Social engagement

#### What we can do

- Visit with friends and family
- Engage with others
- Stay involved in the community
- Volunteer outside the home
- Join a group or club



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## healthy living for your brain and body

### Putting all four pieces together

#### Take care of your health

- Get moving
- Eat right
- Keep your mind active
- Stay connected with others



Combine all four to achieve maximum benefits

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William Thies, Ph.D., is the Senior Scientist in Residence in the Medical and Scientific Relations Department of the Alzheimer's Association's National office.

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## What you can do NOW

- Begin today
- Start small and build
- Do what you enjoy and stick with it
- Make healthy choices
- Make a plan
- Get support from others
- Have fun



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## Be a savvy consumer

- If it's too good to be true – it's probably *not* true!
- Be cautious when you hear huge promises or reports of miracle cures
- Do thorough research
- Consult trusted, reputable professionals
  - Your doctor
  - Your local pharmacist
  - The Alzheimer's Association

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## Contact us – we can help

### alz.org

- Alzheimer's Navigator
- Community Resource Finder
- ALZConnected
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center
- Safety Center

### 800.272.3900

- 24/7 Helpline – Available all day every day

### alz.org/findus

- Support groups, education programs and more available in communities nationwide

### training.alz.org

- Free online education programs available at training.alz.org

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**Get involved**




volunteer




advocate




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**Additional resources**

<p><b>Programs in community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Area Agency on Aging</li> <li>- Local senior centers</li> <li>- Community park programs</li> <li>- Local health clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs</li> </ul>	<p><b>National resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Institutes of Health/ National Institute on Aging             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "What's on Your Plate?"</li> <li>- "Go4Life"</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Administration on Community Living             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Brain Health as You Age"</li> </ul> </li> <li>- U.S. Department of Agriculture: Cooperative Extension System</li> <li>- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</li> </ul>
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**Questions?**

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**Alzheimer's Association**  
We're here. All day, every day.

**24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900**

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