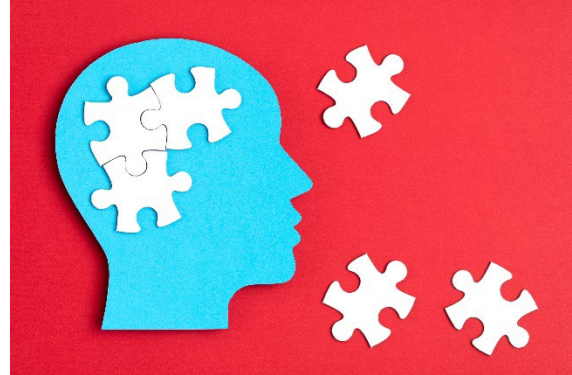


How to Help Keep Your Brain Healthy

Brain health refers to how well a person's brain functions across several areas. The four components of brain health include:

1. **Cognitive Health** – Our ability to clearly think, remember, and learn.
2. **Motor Function** – Balance and control of movement of our bodies.
3. **Emotional Function** – Interpreting and reacting to emotions.
4. **Tactile Function** – How we respond to the senses of touch (e.g., pressure, pain, temperature).



According to the National Institute on Aging, brain health can be affected by age-related changes in the brain, injuries such as stroke or traumatic brain injury, mood disorders such as depression, substance use disorder or addiction, and diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. While some factors affecting brain health cannot be changed, there are many lifestyle changes that might make a difference. Try these tips for keeping your mind "sharp" and investing in your cognitive health!

Keep Your Body Healthy

- Seek out routine health screenings and manage chronic health issues like diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, and high cholesterol.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Refrain from all nicotine products.
- Sleep at least 7-8 hours each night.

Maintain a Healthy Diet

- A healthy diet decreases the risk of chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease.
- Incorporate fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Drink plenty of water.

Be Physically Active

- Studies link ongoing physical activity with benefits for the brain and cognition as well.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of physical activity each week.
- Get outside to walk, jog, cycle, etc.—take advantage of good weather and fresh air!
- Have some fun dancing, playing sports, golfing, or doing another hobby that gets you moving.

Keep Your Mind Active

- Read books, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- Play board games or cards
- Sign up for a class—think music, theatre, dance, creative writing, or any activity you might enjoy!
- Learn a new skill or hobby.

Stay Connected

- People who engage in personally meaningful and productive activities with others tend to live longer, boost their mood, and have a sense of purpose.
- Schedule regular visits with family and friends.
- Volunteer for a local organization that supports a cause close to your heart.
- Consider joining a walking group or hobby club.

Manage Stress

- Exercise regularly and practice relaxation techniques (e.g., yoga, breathing exercises, meditation)
- Try journaling.
- Keep a positive attitude—release grudges or things beyond your control, practice gratitude, and pause to enjoy the simple things.

Source: National Institute on Aging ([nia.nih.gov](https://www.nia.nih.gov))