



Maintain Your Brain

- Forgetfulness is not a normal part of aging
- Many people keep their mind sharp into their 90s
- Alzheimer's or dementia are specific diseases affected by heredity, disease and lifestyle

You can help keep your mind sharp with these tips:

Work your mind every day—Just like exercises build strong, healthy muscles, activities that challenge your mind help it stay strong and healthy. Keep up memory and learning skills just like any other skill. Reading, games, playing a musical instrument, and crosswords have all been found to be helpful. Any hobby that keeps the brain active can be good. Check your local senior center, city park and recreation departments to find free or low cost activities. Try something new—art, memoirs, or a club.

Get more physical activity—Physical activity helps blood flow better to your body and your brain—which may help keep your memory sharp. Aim for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week. Ten minutes, three times a day counts! Walking, dancing, gardening, or whatever gets your body moving. Try a “walk-date” instead of a lunch date.

Keep in touch with people—Regular contact, even with strangers, uses as much brain power as doing puzzles. Social activities help ward off depression and stress, both of which can contribute to memory loss. Get together with loved ones, friends and others for a walk or slide show, game of chess or a book discussion. Clubs, church events and charity work can keep your mind agile.

Learn more today.

To find out more about IAH's Community Education programs, contact our Resource Specialists:

866-421-1964

IndependenceAtHome.org



Focus on healthy foods—Eating healthy foods is as good for your brain as the rest of your body. Research suggests that certain foods are important for brain health. Choose vegetables such as broccoli, spinach and kale. Eat more berries and red grapes. For protein, select salmon, tuna and sardines. Nuts are good too—almonds, walnuts and pecans. What you drink counts, too. Not enough water or too much alcohol can lead to confusion and memory loss.

Control blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes—If you have one or more of these conditions, you have greater chances of having memory problems. Work closely with your doctor and follow your treatment plan.

Manage stress—Stress takes a toll on your mind and body. It often makes health problems worse. When possible, avoid getting in situations that will make you anxious or stressed. Don't do too many things at one time. Use lists and calendars to keep on top of your plans. Take time to relax: listen to music, watch a favorite show, garden, write letters, talk to a friend, and so on. Everyone needs 7–8 hours of sleep.

When to talk to your doctor—Don't worry about small changes in memory. But, major or unexplained changes that cause problems or get worse can be clues that a more serious problem is developing.

- Difficulty with problem solving, learning
- Trouble remembering recent events
- Missed appointments, unpaid bills
- Getting lost in familiar places

Problems with memory can be fixed if they are caused by things that can be changed or treated. Many people are embarrassed by these changes. Don't let shame or fear get in the way. Figuring out the problem and getting treatment quickly can make a big difference.