

Keep your brain healthy...

1) Exercise

- 150-minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week (American Heart Association).
- Does that sound overwhelming? For most, that is a long-term goal (only 28% of American adults meet that standard). The good news is, even 5-minutes of daily heart pounding exercise has significant health benefits. Make getting your heart rate up daily (no matter how long) your first step toward success!
- Exercise may be the most significant healthy habit. Research shows people who exercise live longer and have better-quality lives even when they have chronic diseases.

2) Improve your diet

- Health experts largely recommend the Mediterranean Diet which includes:
 - Fresh vegetables and fruits
 - Whole grains
 - Olive oil
 - Nuts
 - Legumes
 - Fish
 - Moderate amounts of poultry, eggs, dairy, and wine.
 - Use of red meat only sparingly.
- Remember:
 - The Standard American Diet (SAD) is awful, deriving 57% of its total calories from harmful ultra-processed foods (high in sugar, sodium, fat, and chemicals).
 - At the same time, 90% of American adults do not get the RDA for vegetables or fruit.
 - Simple steps to success:
 1. Drink water – removing sugar-sweetened beverages.
 2. Replace ultra-processed bread, cereal, pasta, and such with vegetables and fruit!

3) Sleep (7-9 hours per night) ...I know, good luck!!!

- Research shows a correlation with lack of sleep and Alzheimer's Disease.
- Can you identify obstacles that prevent you from getting quality sleep? In some cases, it is as simple as turning off the TV or putting your phone down.
- Something I have found helpful in getting a better (less restless) night's sleep:
 - Lay down and close your eyes, take 4 or 5 deep breaths through your nose, and slow your heart rate. For 2 or 3 minutes visualize the following day, mapping out any obstacles you might encounter, and possibly incorporate a mental solution.

4) Avoid tobacco in all forms.

- Tobacco restricts blood flow.

5) Know Your Numbers

- Cardiovascular risk factors are also risk factors for dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body weight).

6) Challenge your brain

- Read a book, do a woodworking project, complete a puzzle, join a club for socialization, and so on!