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## Nutrition for Increasing Brain Function

Foods to Fuel Your Brain, Increase Your Mental Performance and Sharpen Your Memory

## Training Your Brain to Remember

The Most Common Techniques for Memory Enhancement

## The Incredible Brain And How to Keep Yours Working

Your Brain Repair Program

## Neurobics: How to Exercise Your Brain and Improve Your Memory

Keeping Your Mind Fit to Meet any Challenge



## If I Only Had A Brain

Proven Formula To Keep Your Brain and Life in Tiptop Condition

## Rewiring Your Brain for Health

How to Detox Your Brain

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# Letter from the editor

You may be asking yourself, “How will I preserve my memory and mental edge as I grow older?”

Alzheimer’s disease and dementia are on the rise, but even if you never acquire one of these neurological conditions, you may find yourself battling everyday forgetfulness and mental fuzziness.

This issue of Home Cures That Work provides the latest memory improvement methods and brain health innovation. These natural – and easy – remedies help improve memory, maintain mental acuity by addressing all of the successfully ways your overall health influences brain health, including:

**Body:** Your physical well-being is critical for healthy brain function, which underscores the importance of diet and supplementation to protect neuronal health.

**Mind:** Mentally stimulating activities means more than simply doing crossword puzzles or playing chess.

**Spirit:** Staving off the damaging effects of stress and other negative thoughts, while filling your life with a new mind can offer surprising benefits for the brain – and Spirit.

Home Cures That Work offers sensible strategies for improving your intellectual performance and lowering your risk for dementia. Find yourself taking remarkable strides in your understanding of how the brain works and what it needs to stay healthy.

So, re-envision aging beyond gray hair and rocking chairs! Build the skills you need to think clearly every day with Home Cures That Work.

Cheryl Ravey  
Editor, Home Cures That Work

# THE INCREDIBLE BRAIN

# AND HOW TO KEEP YOURS WORKING

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

## *Your Brain Repair Program*

**T**he brain is arguably your most important organ. Primarily because it controls everything else. Compared to all the other tissues of the body, it uses the most energy and circulation by far. What's more, a hard shell protects the brain, which sits in water for added shock-absorption.

It is important to protect your brain in other ways, as well.

The "blood-brain barrier" prevents unwanted material, like viruses and bacteria in the blood, from crossing over into the brain tissue. The brain even requires a very specific protein to transport glucose to itself from the blood. Clearly it is important to protect your brain!

However, in spite of all this protection, so many of us have brain dysfunctions, such as:

- Loss of memory
- Dementia, like Alzheimer's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Strokes
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Pain
- Gradual brain shrinkage

In fact, half of all Americans who reach the age of 85 have Alzheimer's disease. [1] How can all this happen if the brain is so well-protected?

Even though the array of factors that can cause brain dysfunction is vast, I want to provide you with the most potent brain-protecting information.

The most important issues for the brain are:

- Nutrition
- Energy production
- Free-radicals
- Toxins
- Exercise
- Nutrition for the Brain

The brain needs a constant supply of oxygen and sugar

for energy. In fact, every essential nutrient is used to fuel the brain. Amino acids that come from the protein you eat are the building blocks of your brain's network. They help make your neurotransmitters. If your brain is lacking amino acids, then the deficiency reflects in emotional and behavioral dysfunction.

If your brain becomes malnourished from low oxygen, lack of nutrients, or toxins, then it atrophies and you lose brainpower. Some of the brain cells may die, but they can also go into an unconscious state, called "senescence."

The brain functions that are lost first are the non-essential ones, such as memory. The essential functions of muscle control, and sensory input are the last to be affected. Thus, a loss of memory may be an early sign of a lack of energy to the brain. Just as our brain influences our health, so our health influences our brain.

## **What Causes the Brain to Atrophy**

1. Lack of oxygen
  - Smoking
  - Lack of exercise
  - Carbon monoxide poisoning
  - Vascular disease
  - Strokes

2. Lack of nutrients
  - Proteins due to diet or poor digestion
  - Good fats
  - B-vitamins (especially folate and B12)
  - Anti-oxidants
  - Magnesium, zinc, and trace minerals

3. Toxins
  - Alcohol
  - Aspartame (and other sweeteners)
  - MSG
  - Caffeine
  - Stimulants
  - Sugar
  - Heavy metals:
    - - Mercury
    - - Lead
    - - Arsenic
    - - Aluminum
  - Drugs/medications
    - - Sleeping pills
    - - Allergy medications
    - - Cholesterol medication
    - - Pain medications
    - - Depression medications

## 4. Inflammation

The above factors (such as cigarette smoking, medications, obesity, disrupted sleep patterns and poor dietary habits) compromise the integrity of your brain. These irritants stimulate inflammation.

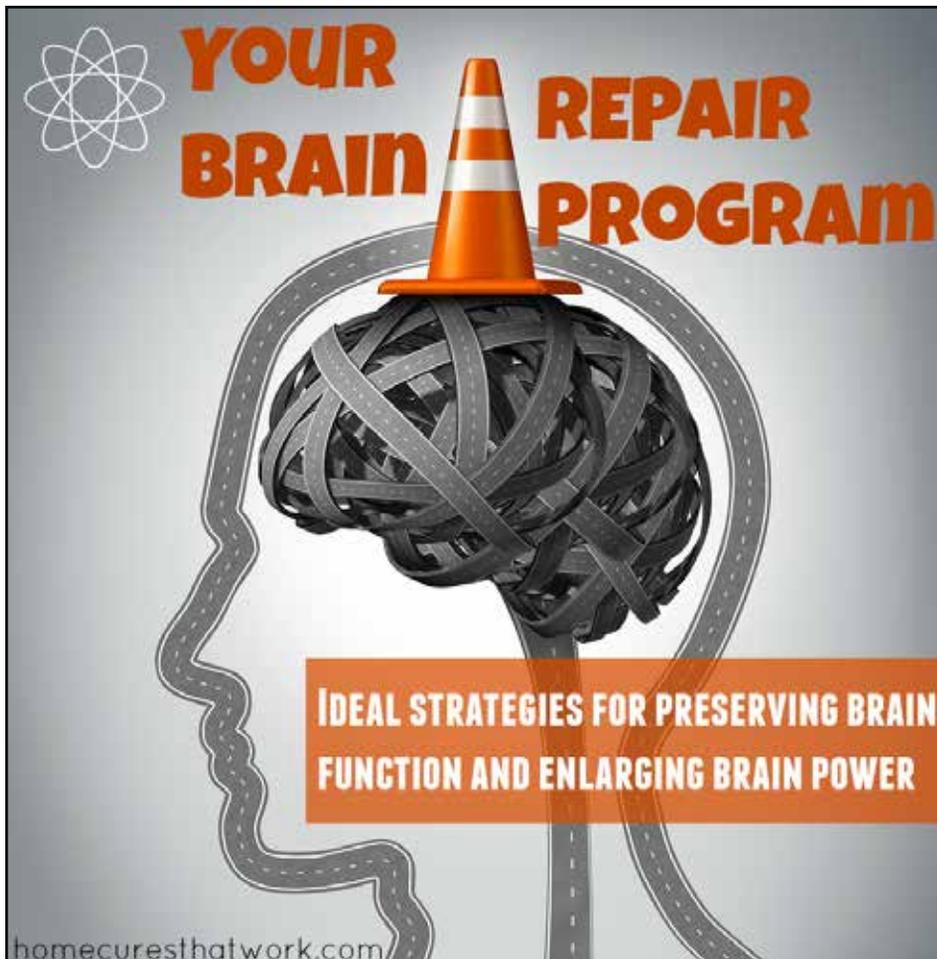
The brain is particularly susceptible to oxidative damage. Energy is generated from food, and regulates

growth and change of cells. Too much energy for the brain causes oxidation, damage, or "rust."

For example, when you have a nice car, you wash and wax it regularly so the paint doesn't oxidize. Oxidation occurs when energy from the sun and oxygen combine and break down the molecular structure of the paint.

There is no way for the car paint to protect itself. So we keep the car in the garage, put a cover on it, or wax it regularly. The wax absorbs the energy, oxidizes, and comes off – then we replace it. You may not like to wax your car, but it's better than replacing the paint!

Likewise energy is generated from food, and regulates growth and change of brain cells. Too much energy causes oxidative damage by "oxygen free-radicals." These are high-energy molecules that damage everything they touch – like the sun. They are especially dangerous to DNA because the damage may cause entire loss of the cell. Losing brain cells is not good for memory! Research has shown that simply eating too many calories can increase the amount of damaging molecules like free radicals that can build up in the brain.



[2] When these dangerous little free radical particles become too numerous for the brain to remove, they can lead to problems in cognitive function, death of neurons, premature aging, Alzheimer’s disease, and dementia.

All aging is caused by damage to DNA in different cell types of the body. But the brain is especially sensitive to damage because brain cells don’t divide or regenerate. That decay is evident in brain tissue with selective loss of brain cells in areas associated with mobility, learning

and memory. This is why those functions deteriorate most rapidly with aging.

We can prevent the “aging” of the brain the same way we can prevent the “aging” of the paint on our car. We just need to know how to do this so hundreds of thousands of Americans like you aren’t robbed of joy and satisfaction in life each year.

We need energy to survive, but energy causes damage!

The brain’s appetite for energy is great. Thus, we

need enough, but not too much energy. How do we walk this fine line?

While there is still a lot to learn about our brain’s metabolism, I have worked out a few ways to help keep your thinking organ in shape, now and as you age.

### The Principles of Preventing Cellular Brain Damage

- Consume less energy (eat fewer calories).
- Eat more nutritious foods high in anti-oxidants. (Eat lots of fruits and veggies with vivid colors for a full range of brain-healthy compounds. Spices like curcumin also act as an anti-oxidant).
- Decrease inflammation (due to allergies, heart disease, arthritis, and so forth).
- Exercise moderately -- Too much exercise causes more energy to be used, which makes more free-radicals.

### The Principles to Repair Cellular Brain Damage

- Good nutrition
- Periodic fasting, which puts our bodies into “repair mode” releasing growth hormone (HGH)
- A Ketogenic Diet – Ketones are a more efficient form

- of energy, allowing repair
- Exercise to improve circulation and produce endorphins

## Your Brain Repair PROGRAM

Various factors conspire to rob us of mental acuity as we age. It is possible to live a longer and healthier life, but preserving brain health is crucial to accomplishing this goal. The ideal strategy for preserving brain function begins with good nutrition—including dietary supplements—and a healthy lifestyle can keep brain dysfunction at bay.

### Diet

Good nutrition is more important to brain function than any other organ. We know that how we eat can affect our bodies, but what we put in our mouths also affects our mood, the brain's energy, our memory, and even our ability to handle stress, complex problems, or simple daily tasks. Don't wait until your memory declines before starting a brain-nourishing program. The brain is a picky eater, but it is simple to keep it running well:

- Eat clean foods in their natural state.
- Avoid processed foods.
- Don't eat too much.
- Use targeted supplements.

- Avoid toxins

Brain neurons are prone to damage from environmental toxins that make their way into our systems. We are told about the scary and harmful chemicals in our environment. But we don't realize that by far we willingly ingest the majority of these toxic substances.

The list of toxins above are mostly things we take on purpose to help us wake up, sleep, or feel better, such as caffeine, MSG, or medications. The best example is sugar. It is sweet. It tastes good. Most of us have experienced the energy boost we get from eating something that provides sugar. Sugar is now found in just about every prepared food, and even a lot of natural foods. However, too much of a good thing can be destructive. Sugar is easily oxidized, creating the need for more anti-oxidants in the brain.[3]

Some common sugars found added to foods include:

- Agave Nectar
- Corn syrup
- Coconut sugar
- Fructose
- Fruit juice
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Glucose
- High fructose corn syrup

- Malt
- Maltodextrin
- Maltose
- Panocha
- Raw sugar
- Rice syrup
- Sucrose

Just because it's natural does not mean it's good for the brain. Sugar damages neurons in the brain. This is why so many people experience a crash shortly after the rush that comes with sugar.

The average American eats their weight in sugar every year! This causes, by far, more brain problems than any other toxin. Many people are seriously damaging themselves with processed foods high in added sugar, and the damage begins in their brains. Chronic consumption of sugar dulls the brain's mechanism for telling you to stop eating. The brain and the body are then in a destructive cycle that is difficult to stop. [4]

### Detox

The brain is most sensitive to toxins. Dozens of chemicals are responsible for widespread behavior and cognitive problems.[5] Very often a brain fails due to a buildup of toxins because the liver isn't removing them fast enough. The liver is the one

of the primary detoxification organs. It filters blood and prepares toxins for excretion from the body. Toxicity in the brain can cause a variety of emotional disturbances, accompanied by physical energy drain, and are an actual symptom of liver toxicity. If you are constantly feeling drained or overloaded with negative emotions, you may be suffering from a form of liver dysfunction and could benefit by a simple cleansing. This is done with nutrients.

Detox with good nutrition. Organic food gives the liver what it needs to remove toxins from the body. Avoid all processed foods. Eat lots of organic vegetables.

All good cleanse programs include fasting. Some are pure “water only” fasts, which are the best, while others are “modified fasts” that use juice, broth, teas, or shakes. Depending on how much you are eating, a fast may last from four to thirty days. Fasting for four days is a minimum for a good liver cleanse.

Another important part of a detox is to circulate out all of the toxins in the lymph and organ systems through the sweat. While many use saunas, steam, or hot tubs, exercise has the

added benefit of improving circulation to the brain.

## Supplements

While various factors threaten us with “brain drain” as we age, the good news is that modern science has identified nutrients that can slow or even reverse the progression of this once-inevitable decline. These supplements offer a smart option for maintaining brain health throughout life.

- Cod Liver Oil --Two tablespoons twice per week.
- Selenium – 200 mcg per day.
- NAC (N-Acetyl Cysteine) – 1000 mg per day for 30 days, then once per week.

## Ketogenic Diet

This diet has been used to heal the brain, such as with injury or epilepsy for over 500 years! It will make you healthier, feel better, perform better and even think better.

In the old days it was very hard because the patient could only eat fat: pork rinds, cream, butter, and very little carbohydrate or protein. Now, however, we have a whole world of “ketogenic” foods available to us.

Coconut oil all by itself has been shown to reverse Alzheimer’s disease in

some cases.[6] The key to a ketogenic diet is to avoid sugar, starch, and too much protein. Everyone is different so the actual amounts will vary. The difference today is that we have a way to measure urine ketones at home. KETOSTICKS are found in almost any pharmacy and are inexpensive.

Ketosis describes the process when the body switches over from burning glucose (the kind of sugar our body uses as fuel) to burning an alternate fuel called ketones. Ketones are a principle source of energy made from the breakdown of fatty acids in the liver. Basically, the body starts to burn fat for energy when we don’t consume very much sugar or foods that break down into sugar.

I have had people use the “Induction” phase of the Atkin’s Diet successfully. However, others do about four days of water-only fasting in order to induce fat metabolism. If they like, they can include beef or chicken broth and coconut oil (2 tablespoons) as part of their fast. This is an excellent way to include the ketogenic diet in a detox program.

## Stress Damages the Brain

Stress is a special problem

because the stress hormones change the neurotransmitters in the brain, causing:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Memory lapses – especially preventing short-term memory from becoming long-term memory

Prolonged emotional stress causes you to forget names, have problems finding the right words, or forget where you parked the car. Now, that's a problem!

The keys to stress reduction are to find relaxation and calmness in the storms of life. We cannot really reduce stress, because stress comes from change, and change is inevitable. Change is a normal, natural, and necessary part of life. People die. People move. People lose jobs. Businesses fail. Accidents happen. Life happens, and we cannot stop it, nor should we. So, how can we have peace in the middle of a storm? Build stress disruptors into your regular routine.

### **Stress Disruptors**

- Exercise raises endorphins
- Low carb diet (ketogenic diet is ideal because it lowers stress hormones)
- Avoid all stimulants (caffeine, MSG,

energy drinks)

- Meditation/Prayer
- Connect with God
- Gratitude
- Hobby – focused attention on something you really enjoy doing
- Do something important that makes an impact in the world
- Continually learn new things
- Love is the key to all stress reduction – loving relationships increase stress tolerance more than any other activity.

### **Use it or Lose it – Exercise your Brain**

The next step is to use your brain more. The brain is just like a muscle: if we just relax all the time, it slows down and gets weaker. However, if we use it regularly, we can maintain brain function. Being proactive now will pay off in the future.

What's more, just like a muscle, if you want to be Mr. Universe (minus the steroids) you must exercise on a grand scale. Exercising the brain is done in a very similar way to the muscles. By stretching, and attempting things you are unable to do, through constant practice you can grow more brain – literally and figuratively! It's time to take your brain to the gym!

A study in Germany included six students who didn't know how to juggle. They all had high-resolution MRI scans of their brains, and then they were taught to juggle. After becoming proficient, a repeat MRI scan showed areas of actual increased brain tissue in exactly the expected places. Further, three of them were told to stop juggling, and after six months another MRI showed they had lost the brain mass, while the three who continued practicing still had it. WOW! The brain is just like a muscle!

There is a need to exercise the brain and get it into shape. The way we do this is by focusing attention that increases our knowledge or ability. The basis for brain growth is doing things you have never done before. I cannot make an exhaustive list, but you will get the picture. The brain learns by doing such things as:

- Learn a new language
- Become an excellent golfer
- Take up sailing
- Do tax planning
- Learn to juggle
- Collect stamps
- Add on to your house
- Learn to play the piano
- Perfect your magic show
- Build an ultra-light plane
- Start your own business
- Write a book

- Go to college
- Raise children – teach them well

It is essential that we emphasize that none of these activities are passive. They all require active brain participation. The types of passive activities that do not improve brain function are just as many, but they all have one thing in common: you cannot increase your proficiency!

- You can't get better at watching TV or movies.
- You can't become better at sitting.
- You can't become more proficient at daydreaming
- You can't grow by taking cruise after cruise, lying on the poop deck, or floating in the pool.

Begin now to enlarge your brainpower by learning new things!

The sooner you begin your program, the better your brain will work for the rest of your life. If you wait until something goes wrong, it is much harder to get function back once it is lost. Start now with a commitment to a program that includes:

- Cleanse and detox every 3 months
- A ketogenic diet for one month every year
- Get off all drugs, stimulants, medications, sugar and other toxins
- Exercise for a half-hour 3 times per week
- Start a learning program
- Take the time to build your stress tolerance

This is nothing new. These are the same things we've always known. It's not difficult to have a better brain. If you need more detail on starting and maintaining a program for keeping your brain working well please see our website and obtain the [BRAIN HEALTH KIT](#).

Get the picture?



Dr. Scott D. Saunders, M.D. is a practicing physician, specializing in preventative health care, who utilizes eclectic health care for the whole family, including conventional, orthomolecular and natural medicine. He is also the medical director of The Integrative Medical Center of Santa Barbara in Lompoc, CA. He went to UCLA medical school and is board certified in family medicine. View natural remedies with Dr. Saunders at: <http://drsaundersmd.com>

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by Amanda Box, N.D.

# NUTRITION for Increasing Brain Function

## *Foods to fuel your brain, increase your mental*

**A**lthough each of us is a person made of parts, there is a single part of our body that defines who we are—the brain. It governs our personality, our thought processes and our memories.

The brain is by far the most complex organ within the human body. However, often in our quest to keep our body

healthy, we overlook our brain. Typically, our focus concerning health centers on preventing things like heart disease, cancer and diabetes. When it comes to diet, most of our healthy choices have to do with the cardiovascular and digestive systems. The reality is we are ignoring the very part of our body that makes us who we are!

Giving our brain the nourishment it needs should really be our foremost concern. This will preserve our memory, give us the focus we need for daily tasks and keep us in good spirits. Even as we age, having a strong, energetic brain is possible with the proper nutrition!

The brain is a unique organ in that it does not have the

ability to store nutrients. This makes it imperative that your daily diet contains the proper nutrition that the brain needs. The brain requires a constant stream of oxygen and nutrients from the blood. What you eat throughout the day directly affects the health of your brain and its ability to function at maximum capacity.

Basing your diet around your brain's needs can improve your:

- Memory
- Focus and concentration
- Alertness
- Mood

Just think, the food you're eating could be contributing to that foggy feeling, depression, or anxiety that you battle. Furthermore, what you eat for

breakfast, lunch and dinner can directly act on your brain's capacity to remember.

You have the power to change the way you think, simply by changing your diet!

Eating the right foods can provide anti-aging effects inside your brain keeping you alert, focused and mentally invigorated long past retirement!

## Macro and Micro Nutrition

A healthy, optimal functioning brain needs nutrition from both macro and micro sources. Macronutrients include carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Micronutrients are much smaller molecules like vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Though most foods contain some sort of macro and micro nutrition, only a specific combination of these two forms can create the perfect combination for brain health.

## The Macronutrients of Brain Function

### Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are important for providing a steady stream of glucose to the brain. Glucose literally acts as a source of fuel by powering the brain and keeping brain cells alive. However,

not all carbohydrates are created equal. It is only complex carbs like those found in whole grains and vegetables that keep your blood glucose levels stable. They provide a constant flow of glucose to keep the brain alert and functioning at maximum capacity.

However, simple carbohydrates like those found in refined grains and white sugar can lead to spikes in blood glucose. Over time, the brain can actually become damaged from chronically high glucose levels. Studies have shown that those with diabetes

and unstable blood sugar are at risk for developing cognitive impairment and dementia![1] Another study found that high blood sugar led to brain shrinkage that resulted in loss of memory![2] Maintaining normal blood sugar levels is extremely important in preserving the brain's functions and memory.

Interestingly there's little evidence that consuming a lot of carbohydrates is necessary for fueling the brain. The brain can also run on ketone bodies, which are an alternative fuel when glucose is not available. However, you still must provide the



brain with healthy fat in order to have ketones available.

Limit your carbohydrates to those found in whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Following the Barton Publishing Food Plate provides a great visual for how much of the diet should include carbohydrates, proteins and fats. The Barton Publishing Food Plate offers a great improvement over the outdated and unhealthy US Food Pyramid.

## Proteins

Proteins are important in the diet because they are the building blocks of amino acids. Amino acids from proteins are used to make neurotransmitters, which allow your brain to network and communicate.

A common neurotransmitter is serotonin, which is helpful for sleep patterns, blood pressure and a calm mood.

Eating protein also increases the levels of the amino acid tyrosine in the body. Tyrosine converts into dopamine and norepinephrine, which contribute to alertness and promote mental energy.

It is estimated that 86% of Americans have suboptimal levels of neurotransmitters. [3] Eating adequate levels of protein increases neurotransmitters and therefore increases brain activity.

Great sources of protein include:

- Free range eggs
- Grass fed beef
- Free range chicken
- Unsweetened organic yogurt or kefir
- Quality whey, rice, or hemp protein powder

Most people require about 40-60 grams of protein a day according to their weight. Remember, although plant protein found in beans and nuts is beneficial, it is missing important amino

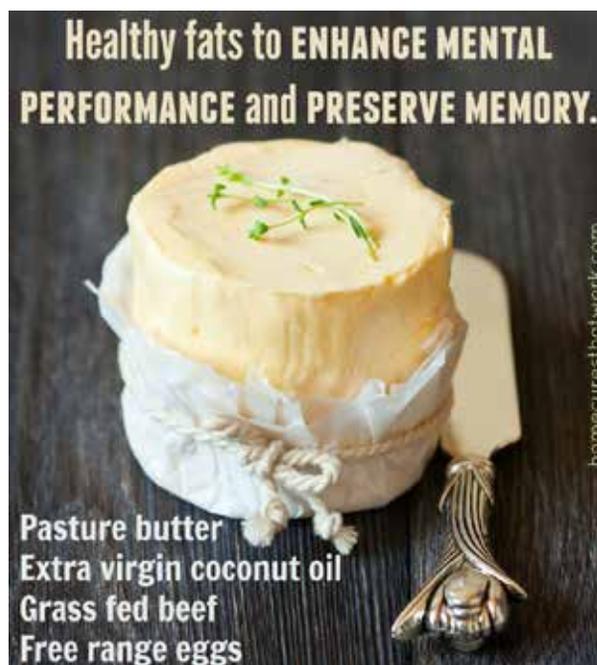
acids. Vegetarian proteins are not complete proteins. Incorporate plenty of animal sourced complete proteins into your diet in order to maintain the levels of amino acids needed for the brain's neurotransmitters.

As always, it's a matter of balance. Eat foods that provide the full spectrum of amino acids your brain needs for an appropriate harmony of energizing and calming neurotransmitters. Pay attention to what you eat and how you feel afterward. Learn what works best for you according to your daily activities and need for rest.

## Fat

Fat is the most important macronutrient needed by the brain. The human brain is composed of around 60% fat, making dietary fat incredibly important for brain health! The low fat diet trend in recent years has starved the brain of necessary fat and cholesterol. Instead, low fat diets promoted carbohydrates, which raised blood sugar causing both damage and atrophy of the brain.

Mayo Clinic research found that individuals who ate high carbohydrate diets had a remarkable 89% increased risk for developing dementia! Conversely, those



whose diets contained the most fat had an incredible 44% reduction in risk for developing dementia.[4]

Two forms of fat are necessary for the brain:

- Saturated fat
- Cholesterol

I understand that promoting these two forms of fat in the diet probably goes against everything you've been taught about a healthy diet. However, facts are facts.

The brain uses saturated fats as the building blocks of its cells.

Just think about it. What is human breast milk primarily comprised of? Saturated fat! An infant requires this high fat content to meet the needs of its brain growth and development. This form of fat is not enemy #1, rather the form of fat that nature provides to promote growth of the human brain!

Cholesterol is essential for the brain as well. Often demonized as the culprit behind heart disease and even strokes, cholesterol actually protects the brain! The brain contains 25% of the body's total cholesterol.

Therefore, it is no surprise

that cholesterol-lowering medications now warn against memory decline.

Interestingly, those with the highest levels of cholesterol may have the lowest risk of dementia.[5] Remember, cholesterol isn't the bad guy! It actually keeps your brain healthy and young.

When incorporating fat into your diet, always stay clear of trans-fats and hydrogenated oils. These are not natural forms of saturated fats and can cause damage and inflammation throughout the body. Margarine, shortening, and many fried and fast foods contain this dangerous fat.

Don't be afraid any longer to add healthy sources of saturated fat into your diet! Build your brain with fat!

Some of the best saturated fats to include in your diet are:

- Extra virgin coconut oil
- Grass fed beef
- Free range eggs
- Pasture butter (Kerry Gold is a great brand)

Putting these brain-boosting fats onto your plate and into your body will enhance brain function, increase mental performance and preserve memory.

## Specialized Micronutrients for Brain Power

There are 3 very important micronutrients that provide the brain with specialized nutrition:

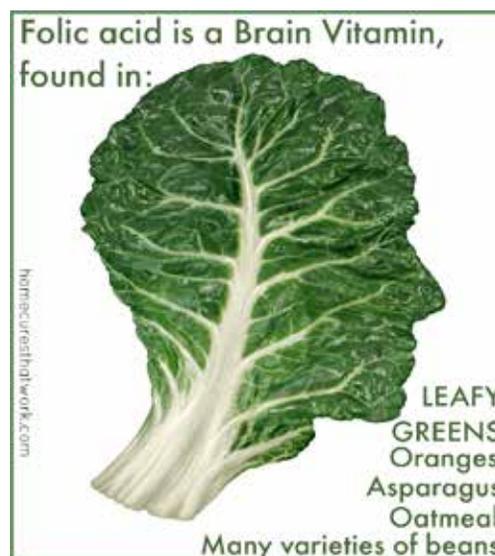
- B vitamins
- Vitamin D
- Omega 3 DHA (technically, a fatty acid)

Each one of these specific nutrients has an important job in the brain by impacting the way we think, feel and remember.

## B Vitamins

B vitamins are often referred to as the "anti-stress vitamins" because of their ability to increase our tolerance for stress. This group of vitamins also helps lift our mood and provides mental energy for the brain.

However, that's not all! A recent study revealed that B vitamins slow brain shrinkage



that can occur with age. Furthermore, these vitamins specifically slowed shrinkage in brain regions known to be most impacted by Alzheimer's disease![6]

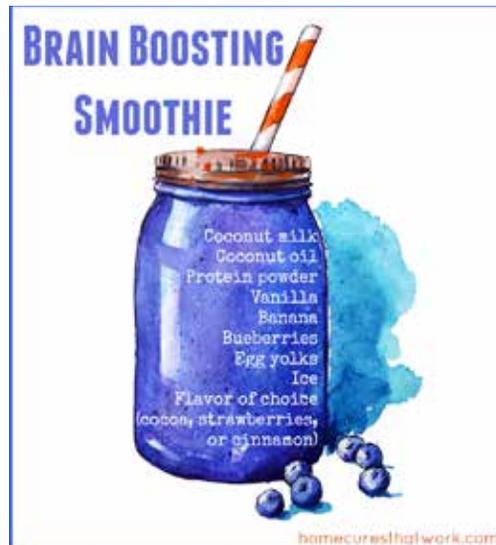
The B vitamins are your brain's vitamins!

Vitamin B12, in particular, is of greatest concern because deficiencies in this important vitamin are associated with dementia, memory loss, depression and even schizophrenia. Symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency include: fatigue, shortness of breath, diarrhea or constipation, problems concentrating and pale skin.

As we age, we often lose the ability to absorb B12 properly, so blood testing is important in maintaining proper levels. B12 shots may be needed to boost this crucial vitamin.

Vitamin B12 is solely found in animal products like meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. So it may be necessary for strict vegetarians and vegans to supplement B12, since it can be difficult for them to get enough of the vitamin.

Folic acid is another important B vitamin for the health of your brain. Folic acid is imperative for the nervous system at every age. However, folic



acid deficiency contributes to aging brain processes, such as Alzheimer's and dementia especially among the elderly.

Folic acid is found in:

- Leafy greens
- Oranges
- Oatmeal
- Asparagus
- Many varieties of beans

Keeping healthy levels of all of the B vitamins is extremely important for brain health. If you have any concerns about your B vitamin levels, it is a good idea to get them checked.

### **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D, though not found naturally in many foods, is another important vitamin for the brain. Low levels of vitamin D can cause confusion, forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating. Many

tissues in the brain contain vitamin D receptors, which when activated by vitamin D, encourage nerve cell growth. Some researchers believe that vitamin D also helps repair damaged neurons in the brain![7]

Increasing your vitamin D is done easily by exposing yourself to sunshine for just 20-30 minutes a day. However, supplementation is also helpful if your vitamin D levels are extremely low. Taking 35 IU per pound of body weight is a great daily dose to keep your blood levels within a healthy range. Free-range eggs are also a great source of dietary vitamin D.

Protect your brain against cognitive deficits with vitamin D.

### **Omega 3 Fatty Acids**

Omega 3 fatty acids, specifically DHA, are the building blocks of the brain. Brain cells, otherwise called neurons, transmit messages throughout the brain and to other parts of the body. The membrane around these neurons is made up of fat, 60% of which is DHA.

In order for the neurons to communicate properly, these membranes need to be flexible. If these membranes become stiff, molecules

cannot pass through the neurons correctly and can result in mood imbalances, difficulty learning, and impaired recall. Adding omega-3 fatty acids to your diet can restore the flexible nature of the neuron cell membranes. This results in increased cell communication, memory and brain function!

Omeegas also seem to ward off the cognitive decline that often comes with age. Omega-3 fatty acids with DHA are found in fatty fish such as:

- Tuna
- Salmon
- Sardines
- Herring

Consuming a diet that promotes a healthy, focused and energized brain takes a diet that is balanced in both micro and macro nutrition. The Barton Publishing Brain Health Solution Kit contains a list of the top 20 memory boosting foods. This makes a great reference and shopping guide for those of you just beginning your journey towards a healthy, balanced diet.

Below are two recipes that incorporate foods that are low in carbohydrates, rich in healthy fats and brimming with vitamins and minerals. These foods will

fuel your brain, increase your mental performance and sharpen your memory.

Start out your day right with a Brain Boosting Smoothie! This easy-to-make meal is great for breakfast or a quick on-the-go snack. It contains healthy fats, protein, vitamins and minerals, which nourish your brain cells and provide the mental energy it needs to focus.

## Brain Boosting Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 2 cups coconut milk
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- 1 scoop whey protein powder (no sugar or artificial sweeteners added)
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 1 banana (optional)
- ¼ cup frozen blueberries
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 cup ice
- Flavor of choice: 1 TBSP organic cocoa powder, ½ cup strawberries, 1 tsp cinnamon, etc.)

Instructions:

Put all ingredients into blender and blend until smooth.

This recipe can be adapted to fit your preferences.[8] You can use cold brewed coffee, tea, almond milk, or coconut water as the base

and add other fruits or flavors.

Note on Egg Yolks: Many people feel uncomfortable using raw egg in any form. I believe you must trust the source of your eggs. However, do your own research before consuming any food raw!

This next recipe contains omega 3 rich salmon along with quinoa, a protein-rich grain. This healthy dinner provides you with the healthy fats, protein and vitamins to boost brainpower.

## Salmon Kabobs with Quinoa and Grapefruit Salad

Salad Ingredients:

- 1 medium grapefruit
- ½ tsp ginger
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup quinoa
- 1 ½ cups water
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon apple cider
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 small serrano or jalapeno pepper, minced
- 2 scallions minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- Freshly ground black pepper

Fish:

- 1 1/2 pound skinless, center-cut salmon, cut into 2-inch cubes
- Wooden skewers, soaked

#### Directions

Rinse the quinoa in a bowl and drain. Put the quinoa in a small saucepan with the water and 1/2 teaspoon sea salt. Boil over high heat, and then reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook uncovered for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside for 5 minutes. Transfer the quinoa to a bowl and fluff with a fork. Cool.

Segment the grapefruit over a bowl, reserving the segments and juice separately. Whisk 3 tablespoons of the grapefruit juice with the vinegar, honey, ginger and salt to taste in a medium bowl. Gradually whisk in 3 tablespoons the

olive oil, starting with a few drops and then adding the rest in a stream to make a slightly thick dressing. Season with pepper to taste.

Toss quinoa with the dressing, chiles, scallions, and cilantro. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Preheat a stovetop or outdoor grill to high heat. Thread the salmon cubes onto the skewers. Brush with the remaining 1 tablespoon grapefruit oil, and season with salt and pepper. Grill the skewers, turning as each side browns, while keeping the salmon moist, about 3 minutes.

Toss the grapefruit segment into the salad, divide among 4 plates, and top with the salmon kebobs. Serve warm

or at room temperature.

Are you looking to improve your brain function, preserve your memory and increase your focus and concentration? Begin by changing your diet! Your brain will respond to the macro and micro nutrients you feed it.

Incorporate healthy fats, protein, omega 3s, B vitamins and vitamin D into your daily life and feel your mind transform. If it is truly our brain that makes us who we are, then in fact we truly are what we eat.

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# TRAIN YOUR BRAIN



by Amanda Box, N.D.

## *The Most Common Techniques for Memory Enhancement*

**W**e've all done it. I certainly have. You walk into a room and you have absolutely no idea why you're there. Or how about those times when the word you're looking for is on the tip of your tongue, yet you just can't seem to find it in your mind.

Some of you may call these "senior moments." I have even heard them humorously termed "brain farts." Having these forgetful moments once in a while is normal. However, this really doesn't have to be. You can begin now to preserve your short term memory ... before your forgetfulness becomes more frequent.

Most people wait until their lack of short term memory is affecting their daily life before they do something about it. But memory loss can be prevented! Nutrition, natural supplements and brain exercises can preserve your memory well into your senior years!

Consider how amazing and complex the human brain is! Even when you aren't actively thinking, your brain:

- Works constantly 24/7
- Processes 2000 messages a second
- Sends information throughout the body at a speed faster than 200 mph
- Maintains your respirations, your temperature and the digestion of your food among hundreds of other functions
- Truly, nothing in the body works without your brain!

From infancy into childhood, our brain is constantly developing, growing and learning. Even into adulthood,

our brain continues to develop. For example, the cerebral frontal cortex of the brain, which contains our reasoning and impulse control, does not fully develop until we are 24 to 25 years old! Looking back I'm sure many of us can relate to seeing a change in our decisions once we reached our mid-twenties. Social lives, parties, and spur of the moment decisions gave way to rational, more mature decisions.

As we continue to age, a variety of influences begin to affect our brain negatively. I remember my first moment of what I like to call "momnesia" after I had my first child. I left for the grocery store with a mental list of what I needed to purchase. But when I got inside the store, I could only remember a couple items! Prior to having kids, I had such a fantastic memory that I never needed to make lists or write anything down.

Disruptions in short term memory can be caused by:

- Surges in hormones
- Poor nutrition
- Stress
- Maternal instinct development during pregnancy
- Breastfeeding

Into our late adult years an even greater decline in short term memory can begin to occur. People in their 50s typically begin to feel their memory slipping more often than ever before. However, this so-called normal decline in memory doesn't have to be the case. The brain has an amazing capacity to continue to develop, but we must be willing and take the initiative.

### **Training the Brain to Remember**

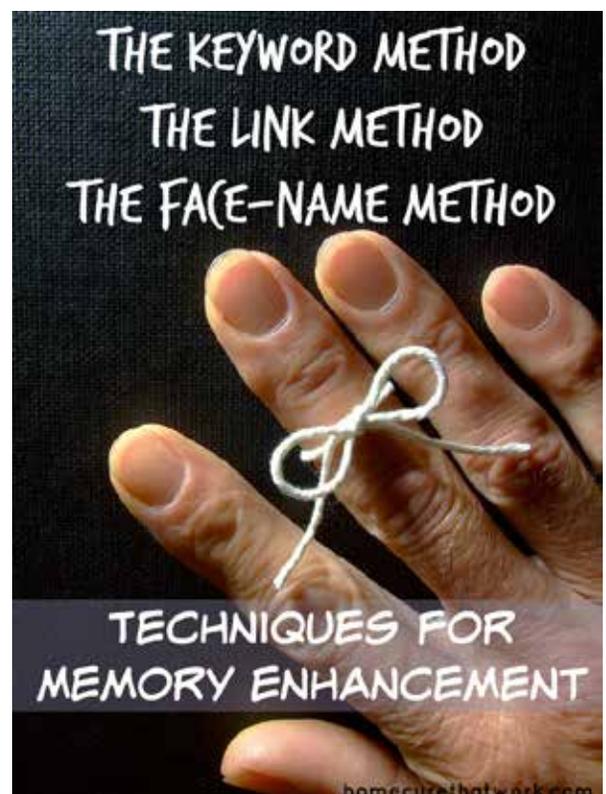
Understanding how memories are created and stored can help in training the brain to remember.

Memory occurs in 3 stages:

- **Encoding:**  
This is when a person takes in information.
- **Consolidation:**  
This is when the brain takes the information it encodes and processes it so that it gets stored.
- **Retrieval:** When a person recalls the stored information.

Most of the time, poor memory issues occur in the retrieval stage. The information is still taken in and

stored. However, retrieving that information can be difficult. You can enhance the retrieval of this information and increase your memory into later adult years with mental training techniques. Using mental techniques helps you "file" your memories into easy-to-access "folders," which enhance recall. These techniques can be used over and over in any situation to improve your memory and keep your mind sharp. People almost always remember an image or picture better than they do mere written or verbal information. So incorporating a mental image works best for retrieval. The most common mental techniques for memory



enhancement include:

### **The Keyword Method**

With this method, you associate the sound of the word and it's meaning with a very unusual or outlandish mental image. This image-association creates mental labels for the things you want to remember. For example, the Spanish word for ears is Las Orejas. You could picture a person with Oreos for ears in order to remember this word. This mental picture is not only outlandish, but contains an image which sounds like the word you are trying to memorize!

### **The Link Method**

This brain training technique is great for memorizing large portions of reading like poems or lyrics. To create the first link, group the first two items with each other using a distinct mental image. For the second link, associate the second image with the third. For the third link, associate the third image with the fourth. And so on. Make sure that each link reminds you of the next.

There is no limit to the number of links you can create! For example if you need to memorize a list of grocery items. Let's say you need onions, apples, napkins and soap from the store. You could imagine biting into an

onion like an apple, realizing it's an onion and exchanging it for a real apple. The juice from biting the apple got on your face so you wipe it off with a napkin and wash your face with soap. Creating a story like this adds even more strength to the "link method."

### **The Face-Name Method**

Stage acts and performers used this method to memorize the names of dozens of people at a time. Start by associating a recognizable feature of the person's face to the sound of their name. For instance you can remember these names: "long nose Larry, or redhead Rachel." The next time you see that person, the facial feature will automatically remind you of their name. This also attaches their name to their face making recognition much easier.

Sound frequencies can also improve our memory. Most of us know that music can enhance exercise. Some people concentrate better with the presence of "white noise" in the background. Let me explain why the brain's electrical activity can be stimulated by various sound frequencies.

Your brain is composed of billions of neurons. These neurons use electricity to communicate with each other and produce brain waves. There is a tremendous amount of electrical activity happening in your brain on any given second. Certain

**SUPPLEMENTS  
To Improve Memory**

homecuresthatwork.com

**DHA  
MCT oil  
Curcumin  
Phosphatidylserine**

sound frequencies can alter your brainwaves to:

- Create an ideal condition so you can learn new information
- Increase your ability to store information
- Improve retrieval of that information

Wholetones, a musical compilation of sound frequencies, is a fantastic resource for utilizing these brain enhancing frequencies. Specifically, listening to the 417 Hz frequency track brings about focus, clarity, improves productivity and breaks negative cycles. This incredible brain enhancing music can be purchased [HERE](#).

## **Fat to Enhance Learning and Memory**

Creative thought depends upon a well-nourished brain. Feeding the brain with proper nutrition is key to a long lasting and energetic mind. The brain needs a constant stream of fuel in order to function. Many times the fuel we give our brains may keep it functioning, yet it isn't the best quality. It's like filling your car up with cheap filter-clogging gasoline, instead of the high quality performance gas.

Diets high in sugar and carbohydrates act like cheap

gasoline for the brain and memory. Though the brain has fuel to function, excess sugar slows the brain, impairing focus and memory. The amount of sugar and carbohydrates consumed in the typical American diet is astronomical! We are literally shrinking our brain with what we eat!

On the flip side, consuming healthy fats can preserve and protect the brain. They can also increase focus, concentration and enhance memory. Your brain is composed of around 60% fat. That being the case, it should come as no surprise that our brains need fat to work correctly. Even though the brain accounts for such a small portion of our body weight, it utilizes 20 percent of the body's metabolic energy.[1]

Fueling your brain with fat provides energy to the brain and helps protect against brain dysfunction, among other benefits. Eating healthy fat also increases the production of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in learning and memory.

Two of the most powerful fats for the brain are:

- Omega 3 fatty acids

- (specifically DHA)
- Medium chain triglycerides (MCT)
- DHA

DHA is a powerful substance. It influences memory preservation, speaking ability and motor skills. The more DHA that a brain absorbs, the better the memory neurons interact with one another.[2] But it also contains the ability to reverse memory deficits! DHA deficiency is related to:

- Mental problems like bipolar disorder
- Depression
- Anger
- Hostility
- Memory decline
- Alzheimer's disease

Researchers have found that DHA, which is found in fish oil, can help memory cells in the brain communicate more efficiently and combat memory loss that comes with aging.

Though the recommended dosages from DHA vary, a recent study found that 800-900 mg of DHA a day improved learning and memory in healthy elderly adults with age-related cognitive decline. [3] This dosage was taken over a 6 month period.

Many times DHA stores in the brain need to be replenished, so a higher dosage, such as 900 mg can be taken over a period over months. The dose can then be decreased to a maintenance dosage of 300-600 mg a day.

## **MCT**

Medium chain triglycerides like those found in coconut oil, can boost cognitive performance, enhance memory and increase focus. A study published in the Journal Neurobiology of Aging discovered that MCTs caused an almost immediate improvement in cognitive function![4]

MCTs contain a shorter carbon chain, which is readily absorbed over long chain triglycerides found in more common fats. MCT oils also have the ability to produce ketones, an alternative source of fuel for the brain. Though the brain typically relies on glucose, ketones provide the brain with energy without the damage caused by surges in glucose.

Consuming 20 mg a day of pure MCT oil or a little over 2 tbsp. of coconut oil, can both treat and prevent memory loss. I add MCT oil to my morning tea. Many people like to add it to coffee as well. It has little to no taste and the benefits can be enjoyed

straight off the spoon!

## **Supplements to Improve Memory**

There are many natural supplements that show a lot of promise in preventing and treating memory loss. However, two of these supplements rise above the rest. These two natural memory boosting supplements have no negative side effects. They can also be taken alongside other medications without any interactions. These two natural brain strengthening supplements help increase focus, improve memory and prevent age related brain deterioration.

## **Phosphatidylserine**

Phosphatidylserine is a substance that is naturally present in the brain. Its job is to assist in neurotransmissions, keeping the fluidity of info traveling from one part of the brain to another.

Information traveling in your brain is like a set of railroad tracks. Phosphatidylserine acts as the railroad ties. It holds the track together to keep information flowing quickly and efficiently. As we age, however, these ties begin to breakdown. Information retained is lost, making memories more difficult to retrieve. The good news is that phosphatidylserine can be

taken in supplement form.

If you feel like you are missing the ties that keep your brain working, phosphatidylserine can get you back on track! Several studies have shown extreme promise with phosphatidylserine supplementation. Memory scores in test patients who took phosphatidylserine increased significantly over those who took a placebo. [5] Phosphatidylserine expert and author Professor Parris Kidd calls this natural supplement, "The single best means for conserving memory and other higher brain functions as we age." These positive effects on memory were found at both a 100 mg and 300 mg daily doses.

## **Curcumin**

Curcumin is the active component found in the spice turmeric. It is a powerful antioxidant with the ability to combat age related memory loss. Curcumin's antioxidant abilities prevent oxidative damage in the brain. This protects neurons from being killed.

Many studies support the brain protective properties of curcumin. A study published in Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior found that curcumin could specifically improve spatial and learning memory. [6] Curcumin supplements also improved stress-related memory

loss in a 2010 study.[7]  
For increased memory, take 1000 mg a day of turmeric that is standardized to 95% curcuminoids.

Remember, your memory doesn't have to decline with age. Brain training techniques, healthy fats, and the right natural supplements can keep your memory as sharp as it was in your youth! Don't wait until you forget to improve your memory! Take steps today to sharpen your mind and regain your quick thinking.



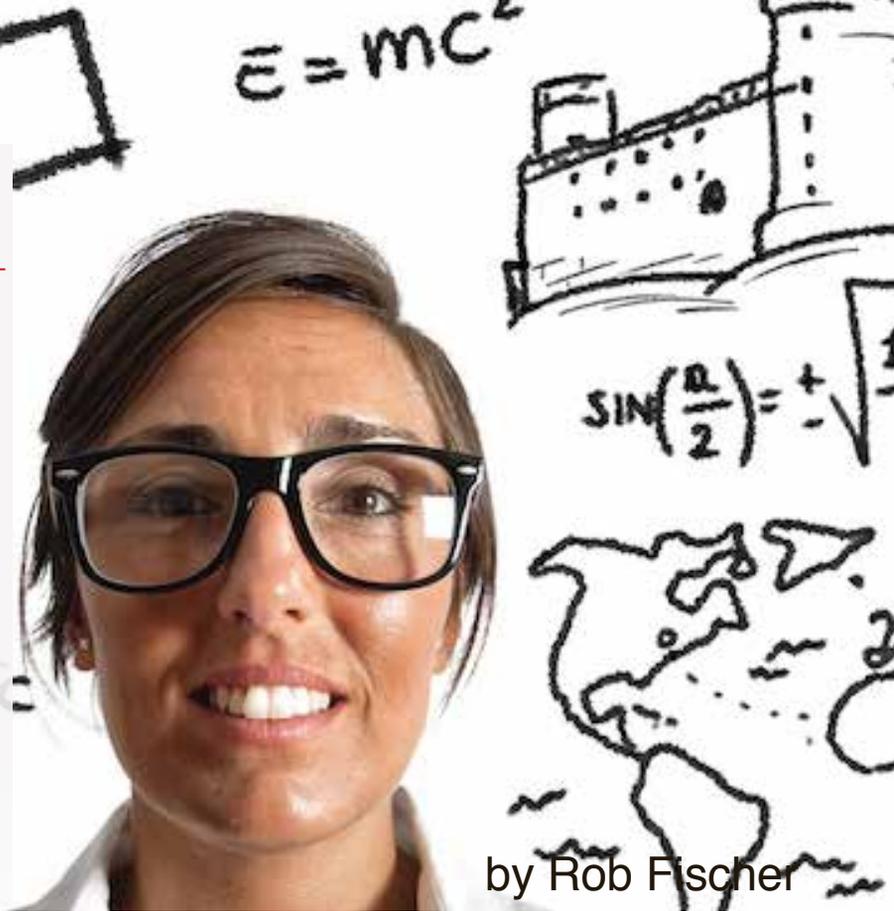
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# NEUROBICS

## HOW TO EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN AND IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY



by Rob Fischer

### Keeping Your Mind Fit to Meet Any Challenge

**R**ed Skelton once quipped, “As you get older, three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and . . . I can’t remember the other two!”

Have you experienced a senior moment lately? Maybe you couldn’t find the car keys, your purse, or the car? How about names? And while we’re at it, how are you at math in your head—in public? Have you been driving lately and all of

a sudden wonder, “Where am I?” Or perhaps you’re looking for just the right word in a conversation . . . but it eludes you . . . until three hours later when you’re standing in the shower! If any of those situations describes you, you’ll definitely want to read on!

Tongue-in-cheek, Mark Twain lamented, “Of all the things I’ve lost, I miss my mind the most.” However, we’ve got some great news for you; it doesn’t have to be that way with your mind or your memory!

Research by Lawrence Katz, PhD, professor of neurobiology at Duke University Medical Center, has revealed some exciting strategies for exercising the brain and

improving memory. Dr. Katz coined the term neurobics to describe these cerebral calisthenics.[1] Neurobics are exercises that focus on keeping our brains agile and pliable.

### The Science Behind Neurobics

Like it or not, we humans are basically lazy! Not necessarily in the bad sense of the word. But we tend to make things easy for ourselves. (If you prefer to call it efficient, that’s okay.) We establish hundreds of little daily routines that enable us to complete most tasks without even thinking about them. For instance:

- When we get up
- The order and manner in which we groom ourselves

- What we eat (or don't eat) for breakfast
- What we do while eating breakfast
- What route we drive to work
- What we listen to in the car
- Where we park
- How we get from our car to our office or work station
- What and where we eat for lunch, etc!

We do all these things mindlessly and in doing so, we've established neuropathways in our brains. These become well-worn paths in our brains. And like the creatures of habit that we are, we follow those pathways habitually—almost religiously. If you think I'm exaggerating, check your response and attitude next time one of those routines gets derailed by an unexpected event!

If we're not careful, these neural pathways easily become ruts! Neurobics describes our willful disruption of those habits and the neural pathways associated with them. We simply choose to do something differently, or in a new way. This is said to release the hormone neurotrophin that opens up new neural pathways, expanding access to information and the way we process it. [2] If done on a regular basis, neurobics will help keep your mind fit to

meet any challenge--whether it's remembering a name, mastering a new computer program, learning to dance or staying creative in your work.

Neurobics is a departure from the popular brain-teasing games and puzzles available. A crossword puzzle or Sudoku can indeed help sharpen the mind, but the scope of their effectiveness is fairly limited to that specific activity. Becoming good at Sudoku, for instance, helps you . . . well, excel at Sudoku and similar tasks that involve numerical relationships.

With neurobics, you're not relying on a game or puzzle, but integrating change in your everyday routines. In this way, all of life becomes our "neural gym." [3]

Dr. Katz also emphasizes the power of engaging all five senses to the extent possible when making those changes. We've known for many years that the more senses you can involve in an activity, the more learning occurs and the more memorable it will be.

Finally, he encourages us to employ our emotions, which he refers to as our sixth sense. Our emotions offer a powerful signpost, reminding us what occurred when, how and why.

To summarize, neurobics involves these three elements:

- Break away from a normal routine or habit in everyday life
- Engage all five senses (sight, smell, sound, touch, taste) to the extent possible
- Invite your emotions to accompany your new experience [4]

## Enemies of the Brain and Memory

Before we give you examples of neurobics, let's look at some of the enemies of the brain. Think of these in terms of the environment in which you conduct your neurobics. Any one of these issues greatly hinders cognitive ability:

- Stress - Because improving one's memory also has a lot to do with increasing one's focus.
- Hurry – Hampers memory and learning
- Some drugs (e.g., memory loss is a side effect of statin drugs) – Kill brain cells
- Too little sleep - Because the brain needs sleep to consolidate new information
- Dehydration (not drinking enough water) – "Dry brain" decreases problem solving
- Lack of physical exercise – Increases the effects of aging on the brain
- Poor nutrition (eating

processed foods and too much sugar) - Nutrient deficiencies can definitely impair your cognitive abilities

For maximum brain health and cognitive skill, minimize or eliminate these enemies or they will continue to work against you and the neurobic exercises will do little to help! For more information on these enemies of the brain and how to beat them, [check out our Brain Health Kit](#).

## Putting Neurobics to Work for Your Brain

What I like about neurobics is that it's very individual. You have your specific neuropathways and I have mine. So the way you and I implement neurobics will be different. But consider the examples below and tweak them to fit your personality and situation or apply these principles to your own neurobic exercise.

### A Trip to the Grocery Store

You no doubt have your favorite grocery store, the layout of which you have in your head. As a neurobic exercise what if you were to deliberately combine some or all of the following elements in your next shopping trip?

- Choose a different

grocery store

- Go shopping at a time that's unusual for you
- Either memorize your list, or write it down in a way that's different than normal
- If you typically shop counter clockwise through the store, shop clockwise
- Intentionally browse the store a bit to discover items you never see in your usual store
- Try new brands that you're unfamiliar with or haven't tried in awhile
- Order something at the deli, meat or fish counter that you don't normally order
- Mentally add the cost of each item in your head and see how close you come at the register
- Make sure you engage all five senses (sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste)
- As you shop, check your emotional status. What emotions are you experiencing?
- If you usually ask for plastic, this time have them bag your groceries in paper bags
- Think up additional changes you might make

Be careful. If you're on a tight schedule, trying to follow through with the above example may only stress you out! And be aware that even when you knowingly change a pattern, you may

feel some frustration. If you do, ask yourself, "Why is this frustrating me?" What can you learn from this situation? That's why these exercises must be very deliberate with a view to stretching your mind.

## Learn How to Dance

The New England Journal of Medicine published a study that concluded the best exercise to improve a person's cognitive skills – whatever age you might be – is dance.

"The research, in fact, targeted senior citizens to determine which activity reduces the risk of dementia. As per the results, 76% of those who danced frequently exhibited lesser signs of dementia, compared to those who answered crossword puzzles and read often.[5]"

Dancing active regions of the brain that calculates spatial orientation, motor signals and emotional responses to choreography. So, dancing is the best leisure activity for ongoing brain health and maintaining intelligence.

Perhaps you have a secret desire to learn how to dance. But you've always said, "I can't dance!"

- Denounce that proclamation and begin a search for dance instruction.

(By doing this, you've already started moving out of your established neural pathways!)

- Begin attending dance classes and determine to meet new people.
- In order to meet new people, prepare two or three open-ended questions to engage others in conversation about themselves. (E.g., "What prompted you to start taking dance lessons?")
- Make a conscious effort to learn people's names. Write them down later to help with recall.
- During the week, practice your dance steps at home and practice the names of those you met.
- When you arrive at dance lessons next week, greet each person by name and engage them in light conversation.

Perhaps you're thinking,

"That's way out of my comfort zone!" That's the point!

Here's a great brain and memory exercise for you to engage in right now: come up with your own neurobic exercise. Jump out of the ruts of your neural pathways and expand your mind!

The brain loves to be engaged with the novelty of new experiences. Your mind becomes bored with routine. Think through and plan what you'll do and follow through with it. Take a bold step and get out of your comfort zone, maybe even learn how to dance. Make the lifestyle choice to exercise your brain and improve your memory –

the side effects are fun, adventure and excitement!

Keep your brain active!



Sources: [1] Lisa Armstrong, "Neurobics Tips: How to Exercise Your Brain," She Knows, October 8, 2013, <http://www.sheknows.com/health-and-wellness/articles/1016375/neurobic-tips>. [2] <http://www.keepyourbrainalive.com/neurobics>. [3] <http://www.keepyourbrainalive.com/>. [4] <http://www.keepyourbrainalive.com/>. [5] <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa022252>



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by Michael Tyrrell

# IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN



## Proven Formula To Keep Your Brain and Life in Tiptop Condition

As a child, the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayor epic film, *The Wizard Of Oz* fascinated me. You remember the Cowardly Lion, The Tin Woodsman, and the lovable Scarecrow? Each of these characters needed a miracle from the Wizard. The lion needed courage. The tin man needed a heart. And

the Scarecrow... the poor fellow... why, he needed a brain.

For the Scarecrow the term, "brain health" was an oxymoron. Here are the lyrics to the song the Scarecrow sang to Dorothy:

*"I could while away the hours,  
conferrin' with the flowers  
Consultin' with the rain.  
And my head I'd be scratchin'  
while  
My thoughts were busy hatchin'  
If I only had a brain.  
I'd unravel every riddle for any  
individ'le,  
In trouble or in pain.  
With the thoughts I'd be thinkin'  
I could be another Lincoln  
If I only had a brain.  
Oh, I could tell you why the  
ocean's near the shore.  
I could think of things I  
never thunk before.*

*And then I'd sit, and think some  
more.*

*I would not be just a nuffin' my  
head all full of stuffin'  
My heart all full of pain.  
I would dance and be merry,  
life would be a ding-a-derry,  
If I only had a brain."*

Obviously, the Scarecrow had a brain, but he felt insecure in using it. It would literally be impossible for him to live without a brain let alone, sing, dance and carry on a conversation with his friends. Perhaps what the Scarecrow felt is what 1 in 5 Americans over the age of 18, feel every year who suffer with mental illness.[1]

Think about it... approximately 43.7 million American adults, or over 18% of the total adult population in the U.S., are suffering from mental illness.

And to add insult to injury, this statistic only includes those enduring conditions such as depression, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia, ADHD, OCD, and autism.

When you add neurological diseases such as, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis the statistics are staggering!!! This doesn't even take brain conditions like PTSD and TBIs (traumatic brain injuries) into account!

Like the Scarecrow, all of these precious people just want a healthy brain.

## **Brain Damage from Your Medicine Cabinet**

Drugs will also wreak havoc on your brain. While it is obvious that street drugs are dangerous, you may be surprised to see the devastating effects that prescription drugs and over-the-counter (OTC) medications have on brain health.

Here is some scary research that made me throw out a couple of items in my medicine cabinet! According to a recent Journal of American Medical Association Internal Medicine study, certain medications both prescribed and OTC, can increase a person's risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.[2]

The study, conducted at the University of Seattle in Washington, looked at common drugs that have an anticholinergic effect on the brain. This means they interfere with the ability of a crucial brain chemical called acetylcholine (ACh) to attach to nerve cells. Without ACh doing its job transmitting messages between brain cells, you would become drowsy, forgetful and confused.

People with Alzheimer's often lack adequate levels of acetylcholine. Some of the medicines that have anticholinergic activity and can increase the possibility of developing dementia are:

- Tricyclic antidepressants, such as doxepin
- Antihistamines like Benadryl (diphen-hydramine)
- Advil PM
- Detrol (tolterodine), which treats overactive bladder

The data was based on 3,434 participants over the age of 64 that did not suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's. After seven years of follow-up, researchers found that 797 participants who had taken the anticholinergic drugs developed dementia. Of those that developed dementia, 637 participants (18.5%) eventually developed Alzheimer's disease.

For a more complete

list of which drugs have anticholinergic effects, please visit here. Do you have any of these drugs in your medicine cabinet? If so, you may want to do what I did.... throw them in the garbage.

Do you remember the anti-drug ad campaign from the late 1980s that equated eggs being fried with frying one's brain on drugs?[3] "This is your brain. This is drugs. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?" Turns out they were right.

Unfortunately, as you can see, a large percentage of brain damage results from drug use. This is true not only of illegal drugs, but also of prescription and OTC medication. The truth is we need to know the long term effects of what we put in our bodies. I am preaching to myself as well!

## **Help Your Brain by Staying Hydrated**

In fact, let me tell about a recent incident in my life. What I did demonstrates that just because we "know" a lot about health and wellness, supplements, proper diet and exercise does not mean we always do everything by the book.

For a few months I have been feeling "off." Because I wasn't sleeping well, I started taking Advil PM to help me

sleep at night. I also started taking pseudoephedrine for my allergies, every night. But when I coupled those medications with a crazy schedule, working long hard hours, and training to become a certified diver, it all became a recipe for disaster!

Staying hydrated in Florida (especially in the summer heat) is one of the most important factors for staying healthy. Well, I made a critical error on my second day of scuba diving certification. I forgot to hydrate before my beach dive!

Even though you are in water when diving, the ocean's salt and the oxygen tank's dry air dehydrate you. So if you forget to drink water before you dive, you could have a problem. Immediately after my morning dive I felt fine, but by the middle of the night I was on my way to the emergency room!

You see, I created the perfect storm.

- For months I was burning the candle at both ends.
- I was using OTC medications on a regular basis.
- I failed to properly hydrate, especially before going outside to dive and exercise.

Boom! I put my health

at risk with overexertion and the results were adrenal exhaustion and electrolyte imbalance.

Electrolytes are minerals in your blood and other body fluids that carry an electrical charge. Nerve function depends on the processes that electrolytes regulate and maintain. Without these electric transmissions, the brain could not stay in control of the body's many functions ... and I learned this the hard way.

The presence of stress in your life can cause your body to develop an electrolyte imbalance. Electrolytes are part of the most basic of life functions, including nervous system control. Too much or too little of certain electrolytes can cause anxiety leading to a panic attack. I never knew what a panic attack was until I was on my way to the ER.

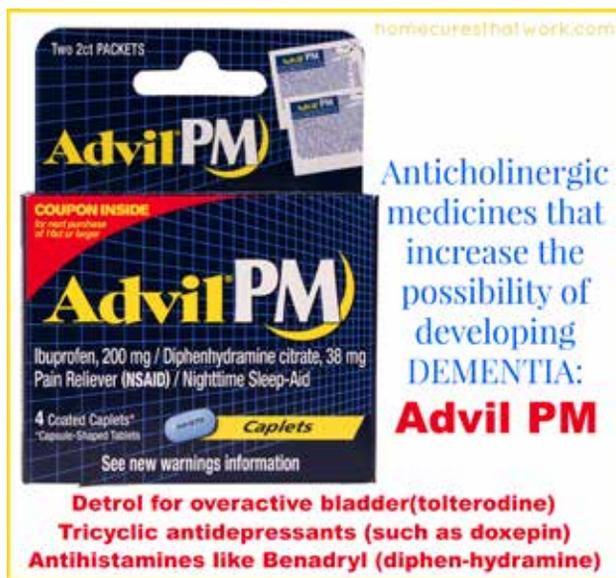
Let me tell you, I don't ever want to have another one!

When you crash and burn, don't waste time looking for a culprit. Just look in the mirror, forgive yourself, and do what you know you need to do to get well.

My first choice to remedy the panic attacks was obviously to listen to Wholenotes:

- 396HZ (Open Door) is very relaxing and releases anxiety, guilt and fear
- 741HZ (Great Awakening) brings the awareness of God for deep spiritual and emotional healing

To rehydrate I chose Electrolyte Stamina Power Paks, Everlast Hydrate Elite performance drink and coconut water. For adrenal support I took Cytozyme-AD and got lots of rest.



## A New Mind

If you don't take care of your brain, it can't take care of you! Like the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz, I had a brain... I just didn't use it. And that is the problem with a lot of us...we know what to do but often, for one reason or another, we don't.

The apostle Paul says something quite similar in Romans 7:19, "I want to do what is good, but I don't.

I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway."

Imagine for a moment having two hard drives on the desktop of your computer. One is filled with good, the other, evil. And since you own the computer, you can choose which one you want to access.

A follower of Christ actually has this ability to choose. We have the ability to think either with human reasoning, or with the mind of Christ!

"For, who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach Him? But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:16

"And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things

that are excellent and worthy of praise." Philippians 4:8

As you can plainly see, it's up to you to decide what thoughts manifest in that wonderful brain of yours. Remember, as a man thinks, so he is! (Proverbs 23:7)

In writing an article about brain health, I would be remiss in my duty not to mention the Creator of our amazing brains... God Almighty. And since He created the brain, He knows what it takes to keep it healthy. You can eat right, exercise, take all the right supplements and still have an unhealthy brain. Stinking thinking can cripple the healthiest brain.

Here is a proven formula that will keep your brain and your life in tiptop condition. Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern (schematic) of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able

to test and approve what God's will is...His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Without God's mind all you have at your disposal is your human reasoning. How far do you think that will take you? Remember, if you ask Jesus into your life...you now have His mind. That's right... you have two hard drives to choose from! Here's a hint: use God's; it's perfectly healthy.

Your whole life could change for the better right now... if you only had a brain! For me, giving my life to Jesus to run was a "no brainer!"

I urge you to give your life to Jesus Christ and let Him begin transforming your mind to become more like His.

Think about it.

Sources: [1] <http://www.samhsa.gov/disorders> [2] <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2091745> [3] Script for PSA by Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 1987

Michael Tyrrell, [www.michaeltyrrell.com](http://www.michaeltyrrell.com) is the founder of the Network Center Inc., a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2001 which works as an advisory agency to local churches, faith-based ministries, Para-church ministries, schools, home fellowships and music ministries in connection with their outreach ministries or missions based activities. Michael has been committed to training their key leaders and members to deliver the message of their Christian faith in order to reach the lost, the disenfranchised, the sick and the hurting through the organic roots of the Christian faith and other areas as needs arise. Michael has been in full-time ministry for the last 27 years and is a writer music producer and well-known musician.





# REWIRE YOUR BRAIN FOR HEALTH

by Dr. Rob Fischer

## How to Detox Your Brain

**W**hat goes on in your brain profoundly impacts your body. And it's no "Jedi mind trick!"

Incredibly, scientists and medical doctors explain that "75-95% of the illnesses that plague us today are a direct result of our thought life."<sup>[1]</sup>

The use of placebos (a harmless, drugless pill) provides powerful evidence that the thoughts in the brain can supersede what the body is experiencing. In many cases, a placebo works as well as the so-called "real" medication or surgery.<sup>[2]</sup> Time after time, placebos work because people believe they work.

Dawson Church, author of *The Genie in Your Genes* explains, "Each of us holds the keys to a pharmacy containing a dazzling array of healing compounds: our own brain...Our brains are themselves generating drugs similar to those that the doctor is prescribing for us."<sup>[3]</sup>

### The Power of the Brain

The human brain processes 400 billion actions per second! We're told that our brains hold the capacity for storing three million years' worth of data—something none of us will ever begin to approach.<sup>[4]</sup>

We are constantly developing and cultivating our minds every moment of the day, building new synapses and creating physical connections in the brain. Scientists refer to this growth as "the magic trees of our mind." Our thoughts are the stuff from which these "trees" grow and develop.<sup>[5]</sup>

Healthy thoughts produce healthy trees and unhealthy thoughts spawn unhealthy trees. These unhealthy thoughts not only affect our emotions, minds and relationships, but also profoundly impact our physical health.<sup>[6]</sup> Good trees produce good fruit; bad trees produce bad fruit.

One of the big deceptions of the day is that we are victims of our circumstances. We develop a disease or ailment and blame our ethnicity, our genetic disposition, or a host of environmental factors. But medical science is demonstrating the fallacy of this thinking.

Remember, a victim is always a victim; meaning that a victim can never rise above their circumstances or situation. To do so requires right thinking. A victim is always a slave to their circumstances. Only when

a victim sees themselves as victor can they conquer those circumstances. This is true whether we're talking about a social ill or a physical one.

We often feel like victims of our genetic heritage. But as it turns out, there is a determining factor even stronger than genes. It's called epigenomes. And epigenomes can change your genes. What are epigenomes? Essentially, epigenomes are your thoughts. Your thoughts can change your brain's structure and how it works. This process is called neuroplasticity.[7]

## Brain Toxicity

What we're saying is that a toxic brain will produce toxicity in the body (and in all other areas of our lives as well). Below are some of the most common toxic thoughts that lead to brain toxicity. See if you recognize any of these:

- "Would've, could've, should've" thoughts
- "If only I had..."
- Replaying old, toxic tapes in our minds from a caustic conversation
- Creating bad hypothetical situations in the future
- Stress (this is a huge problem)
- Passivity
- Dishonesty
- Lack of forgiveness
- Anger

- Fear
- Hate
- Jealousy
- Envy
- Discontent
- Allowing a situation or illness define you: "my cancer," "my heart problems," "my back," "my disability," etc.
- Negative statements like: "Nothing ever goes right for me!" "I can't do anything right!" "I just knew things wouldn't work out!" "I'll never be able to...!"

If any of these thoughts are common for you, you need to detox your brain, because more than likely those thoughts are affecting your physical health too.

Thoughts are not harmless, but cause us to grow "branches" (synapses) in the brain. These branches determine patterns that result in actions. When we think bad or negative thoughts and begin to hold onto them, physical changes occur in our brain. We are allowing those toxic thoughts to hijack our brain.[8]

These toxic thoughts can cause illnesses such as: diabetes, cancer, asthma, skin disorders, allergies, and high blood pressure.[9] When Proverbs declares, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones," we can take that literally.[10]

In terms of these trees in our brains, whatever we feed grows. If we feed and nurture negative and toxic thoughts, we are cultivating a toxic forest in our brains that will poison our bodies, minds, emotions, and relationships.

For example, toxic thoughts like fear or stress cause physical reactions in the brain involving 1400 different chemicals and more than 30 hormones and these alter the brain and impact the body.[11] As a result, stress-related disorders have risen in epidemic proportions including: depression, anxiety, autism, attention deficit disorder, memory problems, and dementia, all of which are making pharmaceutical companies very profitable.[12]

"Americans live on caffeine and Prozac. We use substances to manage our moods. In fact, the four top-selling items in grocery stores are all drugs that we use to manage our mood and energy: caffeine, sugar, alcohol, and nicotine." [13]

Dr. Lissa Rankin, MD, writes, "As an integrative medicine doctor in posh Marin County, Calif., I never understood how my patients – all health nuts, eating vegan diets or juicing, working out with personal trainers or taking supplements, and sleeping eight hours a night – could be

some of the sickest people I've ever met. But after my research, I had an epiphany: My patients were sick because they were in chronic repetitive stress response.”[14]

Hans Selye, MD, who coined the word “stress” and first mapped out its biological effects, wrote, “The modern physician should know as much about emotions and thoughts as about disease symptoms and drugs. This approach would appear to hold more promise of cure than anything medicine has given us to date.”[15]

All of this points to the fact that our thoughts exert a profound impact on our brains and subsequently on our physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being. Our thought life even determines how well a medication will work on us![16]

## How to Detox Your Brain

According to Dr. Caroline Leaf, “Medical research increasingly points to the fact that thinking and consciously controlling your thought life is one of the best ways, if not the best way of detoxing your brain. It allows you to get rid of those toxic thoughts and emotions that can consume and control your mind.”[17]

Dr. Leaf explains that changing

your thinking is essential to detoxing the brain. If we allow negative or toxic thoughts free-reign they will dominate our thoughts and our lives and wreak havoc with our health. To counter this, we need to learn to engage our thoughts and evaluate whether a thought is harmful or healthy and whether we should accept or reject it.[18]

We do this by analyzing our mental processes. Old patterns are often difficult to break. If over the years, we've cultivated a forest of toxic thinking, we need to actively engage in rooting out those toxic trees and “reforest” our brains with healthy trees.

God designed us with the amazing ability to change our brains. Like no other creature, we have the capacity to stand back and evaluate our thinking

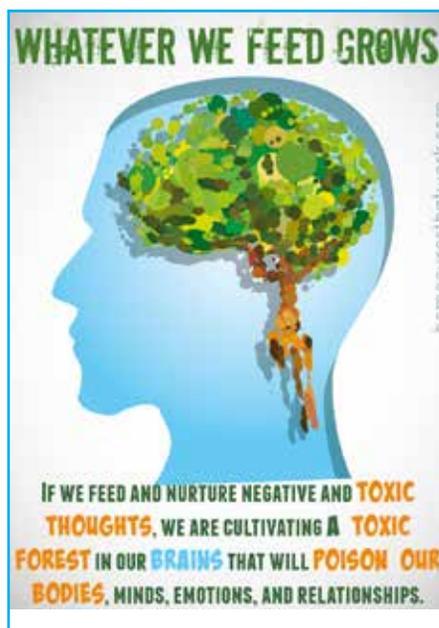
processes. We can determine for instance that by holding a grudge against someone who harmed us in the past we have built a hedge of thorns in our minds and relationships.

That grudge is producing toxicity in our brains and impacting our physical health. As a result, we may get sick more often, suffer from chronic upset stomach, experience headaches, high blood pressure, and even skin rashes.

The antidote is to genuinely forgive that individual. When we choose to forgive, not only are we extending mercy and love to that individual, but we are freeing ourselves from the awful burden of bearing that grudge. In place of that pit in our stomach we now feel peace.

In order to rewire our brains, we must take our toxic thoughts captive in our conscious mind and decide to no longer feed them. We determine to root them out of our lives. Recognize that thoughts of fear, anxiety, anger, jealousy, hate, and others like them control us when we yield to them in our thoughts. Instead, we must replace them with positive, wholesome thoughts.

As a result, chronic pain can go away after resolving



hatred; hives and skin rashes can disappear when we stop being anxious; an eating disorder can end after coming to grips with our stress; and high blood pressure can return to normal when we stop imagining problems.

Dr. Hyman tells of a man who, after losing his wife, developed heart failure. Instead of prescribing medications, he urged his patient to attend to his strong feelings of grief. The man followed his advice and dramatically recovered.[19]

We can rewire our brains to a great extent in as few as 21 days, but it takes conscious, active participation on our part. [20] We must identify and root out the caustic, negative, toxic thoughts and replace them with good, pure, wholesome ones.

There's an amazing example of this process in the New Testament. In his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul was writing from prison in

Rome. He was an old man when he wrote this letter and had suffered incredible physical and emotional trauma for his faith in Christ.

If anyone had the "right" to entertain thoughts of bitterness, anger, regret, anxiety, and discontent it was Paul in his current situation. Yet, in spite of his circumstances, here's what he wrote:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is

admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him [Christ] who gives me strength.[21]

Choose to replace anxiety with joy; anger with gentleness; lies with truth; what is dark and ugly with light and beauty. Choose to rewire your brain for health!

As important as a nutritious diet and regular exercise are to our health, the thoughts we entertain each day may be even more significant predictors of our health, longevity and quality of life. And that's something to think about!

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Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.



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