



HEALTHY AGING WITH A HEALTHY BRAIN

wiha
Wisconsin Institute
for Healthy Aging

Your brain helps you think, remember, and solve problems—but do you ever think about how to take care of it? Making healthy choices can help your brain stay strong and sharp. While your genes play a part, the way you live matters a lot too! Check out the things you can do below to help your brain stay healthy and lower your chances of getting diseases like dementia.

10 Things You Can Do For Your Brain



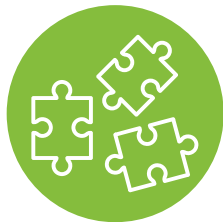
Be Active

Moving your body helps your brain stay sharp and lowers your risk of memory problems. Exercise boosts blood flow and brain-friendly chemicals. Walking, swimming, or dancing are great options. Try to get at least 150 minutes of activity each week.



Eat Well

Healthy foods help your brain work better. Eat lots of fruits, veggies, lean meats, and whole grains. The Mediterranean diet—rich in fish, greens, nuts, and olive oil—can lower your risk of dementia. Try to eat less red meat and full-fat dairy, which can harm brain and heart health.



Challenge Your Mind

Keep your brain active by doing puzzles, playing games, reading, or learning something new like painting or music. You could also try a class, pick up a new hobby, or travel. Staying mentally busy keeps your brain strong!



Sleep Well

If you're over 65, aim for 7–8 hours of sleep each night. Good sleep helps your memory, mood, and overall health. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Avoid long naps, use bright light during the day, dim lights at night, and turn off screens 30–60 minutes before bed.



Be Social

Staying connected helps protect your brain. Talk with friends, join a club, or try a group class. Being social keeps your mind active and your memory strong. Programs like those from the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging are a great way to meet people and stay healthy.



Manage Stress

Too much stress can hurt your memory and focus. Take quiet time to relax—try deep breaths, prayer, or meditation. Exercise also helps. If you're feeling really down or anxious, talk to your doctor. Mental health matters too!



Control Health Conditions

High blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol can increase your risk for dementia. Work with your doctor to manage these conditions and stay on top of medications.



Avoid Smoking & Limit Alcohol

Smoking and heavy drinking can damage blood vessels in the brain. Quitting smoking and drinking in moderation can help protect brain function.



Protect Your Head

Falls and head injuries can raise your risk for memory problems later in life. Wear seatbelts, use helmets, and make your home fall-safe. Visit fallsfreewi.org for more information on staying falls-free.



See Your Doctor

Regular checkups help catch early signs of problems and keep your brain and body healthy as you age.

Taking care of your brain is just as important as caring for your body! Small changes in your daily routine can make a big difference in how you feel and think as you age.

For more tips, programs, and resources to support healthy aging, visit the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) at www.wihealthyaging.org/brain.