



Optimizing Your Brain Function

A Mind-Body-Spirit Approach to Brain Health and Avoiding Memory Loss

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Memory loss is not an inevitable part of the aging process. What we know about the brain and its functioning has increased dramatically in the last decade or so. Although many people fear developing memory loss as they grow older, or struggle with brain fog in middle age, scientists are now discovering that ancient techniques for keeping our minds free from stressors complement modern ways of preventing brain diseases.

Why do Native Americans have a much lower incidence of Alzheimer's disease than many other Americans do? Their medicine men and women, or shamans, understood what western medicine is just beginning to discover: that optimal brain health is achieved by eliminating toxins from the body, eating well, fasting, getting movement, and using the traditional practice of energy medicine.

In energy medicine, shamans use specific techniques to interact with a person's luminous energy field, or LEF, which encases the physical body and is encoded with information that affects how we live, age, and die. Like them, we can clear our energy field of dense patches of slow moving energy, which developed as a result of stress and trauma. We can do this by using meditation and visualization.

We can also use our minds, or thoughts, to train our brains to function better and release the physical, emotional and mental stressors that affect memory, mood, and mental acuity. Additionally, if we consume plants with ingredients that are neuro-protective, we protect our brains from the processes that lead to deterioration and disease.

There are several foods and food supplements that foster brain health. Your brain-healthy diet should be mostly plant based and include healthy fats such as virgin olive oil, coconut oil, and fish oil from wild (not farmed) cold water fish such as salmon and sardines. Eat plenty of organic fruits and vegetables. Avoid dairy products and refined sugars. If you are gluten-intolerant or have celiac disease, avoid grains. Limit caffeine, sugars, and alcohol to reduce dependence on these stimulants. Avoid artificial flavors and colors, and processed foods including hydrogenated oils.

Consider taking food supplements that promote brain health: DHA, alpha-lipoic acid, pterostilbene, sulforaphane, curcumin from turmeric extract (a spice used in curry), and green tea extract.

Exercise in a non-stressful way that boosts your mood. Doing so causes biochemical changes in the brain that lead to optimal brain health. Walk, bike, or jog at least 20 minutes a day at a brisk pace and work your way up to 45 minutes a day. In addition, practice yoga and stretch at least twice a week for 30 minutes a session.

Get eight hours sleep so your brain cells can repair themselves after the stress of the day.

Meditate regularly using whatever meditation practice feels right to you. Note that mindfulness meditation performed for just 30 minutes a day for 8 weeks will grow the part of your brain associated with calmness, mental clarity, learning, and memory.

Fast at least once a month with the permission of your physician, staying hydrated throughout the day. Fasting increases the amount of BDNF, or brain-derived neurotropic factor, your body produces for repairing any damage to brain cells.

Practice forgiveness. Don't hold grudges or dwell on past injuries. Harbor positive thoughts and use them to replace negative thoughts, which cause the brain to release stress hormones that harm brain cells over time.

To forgive someone, sit comfortably and focus on your breath as you inhale and exhale deeply and slowly. Bring into your mind the image of the person who harmed you. Allow yourself to feel your emotions as you breathe in one long breath. Feel the anger or resentment swell inside you. Now, for five long breaths, superimpose over this image the image of someone you love. Watch the image of your loved one strengthen in clarity as the image of the one who hurt you fades away. Feel the emotions of love and clarity. Repeat this exercise often in order to clear your LEF (light energy field) of the dark, heavy energy of anger or resentment.

Mind, body, and spirit medicine all have a powerful effect on brain health, optimizing wellness when used regularly. Each wellness practices benefits the brain and your mood. Used together, they can lead to a healthy brain whatever your age.

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