

Alliance

Handshake

October 2014

This month we want to focus on improving your “mental muscle” or exercising your brain. We all know that exercise is good for the body. Now scientists are discovering it’s good for the brain as well. In recent years researchers have found that exercise improves memory, concentration, and abstract reasoning among older adults, and may even delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease.

It works like this: aerobic exercise increases the blood flow to the brain, which nourishes brain cells and allows them to function more effectively – “kind of like making sure your engine is all tuned up,” says Waneen Spirduso, Ed.D., a professor at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of *Exercise and Its Mediating Effects on Cognition* (Human Kinetics, 2007).

In this newsletter we are including some tips on helping your brain and we have included an exercise for you to try that will boost your brain’s function – “Superbrain Yoga”!

-William Van Ry

People who exercise and have higher physical fitness levels during middle age have a significantly reduced risk of developing dementia later in life.

Annals of Internal Medicine, February 2013

Memory Game



It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete. [Edition 1, Volume 1]

Word Game



Last issues word: **HYPNOTIC**

hint	pinot	point	tiny	chin
hypo	pint	pointy	topi	chino
phonic	pinto	pony	topic	chip
phony	piny	python	typo	chit
phot	pitch	notch	icon	chop
photic	pith	ontic	inch	city
phyton	pithy	optic	into	coin
picot	piton	otic	itch	cony
pinch	pity	thin	itchy	copy

The average is 36 words. Did you meet or beat this standard?

Can you find 41 words in next issues word **BROODING ?**

Exercise can actually promote growth of new brain cells in the part of the brain that controls **memory and learning** according to new research. You can exercise your brain with activity that is fairly simple, like walking for 20 minutes a day or doing the following exercise daily. This simple exercise – called “Superbrain Yoga” - boosts brain function by stimulating acupressure points on the earlobes. Go ahead. Try it!

SUPERBRAIN YOGA

Step 1: Place your left hand on your right earlobe, thumb on the front of the lobe with the fingernail facing outward and second finger behind the earlobe. Then with your right hand grasp your left earlobe, again keeping your thumb on the front of the lobe facing outward. Press both earlobes simultaneously; making sure your left arm is close to your chest and inside your right.

Step 2: As you press on your earlobes, squat down slightly keeping your back straight. Do 10-12 squats, inhaling through the mouth coming up. Place a chair underneath you as a safety precaution.

Step 3: Repeat daily to boost your brainpower.



SLEEP AND THE BRAIN

A new animal study shows that sleeping after learning encourages the growth of tiny protrusions from brain cells. These protrusions then connect to other brain cells and make it easier to pass information from one brain cell to another brain cell, thus improving **long-term memory**. A doctor in this study said: "We've known for a long time that sleep plays an important role in learning and memory. If you don't sleep well you won't learn well." *Science, June 2014*

Similarly, researchers now believe that people with chronic sleep interruption may face an early onset of Alzheimer's disease. Their findings are based on an

animal study involving sleep-deprived mice that have memory testing done on them. The mice not getting enough sleep had a significant problem with **memory and learning** compared with mice that slept normally.

Neurobiology of Aging, February 2014

Think about this. Does your dog bark or whimper in the middle of the night to go outside or does a snoring pet disturb your sleep? If so, then chances are you're not alone. 10% of people experience sleep trouble because of a pet according to the Mayo Clinic (*June 2013*).

If this is true for you, perhaps you need to find ways to improve your sleep and still meet your pet's needs.

[A WORD ABOUT FACEBOOK AND COGNITIVE ABILITIES](#)

Elderly adults who learned to use Facebook on a daily basis scored 25% better on tests measuring their ability to **think, reason, or remember** things than other elderly adults who did not use Facebook.

University of Arizona, Feb 2013

[BRAIN POWER BOOST](#)

Unless told otherwise by your physician, regularly eating the healthy fats found in some fish – halibut, mackerel, salmon,

trout, and tuna - , extra virgin olive oil, and some nuts - almonds, pecans and walnuts – appear to help protect brain cells and may assist in maintaining cognitive functions like **thinking or remembering** in older individuals. Not enough information is available to indicate what quantities of these foods might be most beneficial for brain health.

There is some indication that vitamins, such as vitamin E, or vitamins E and C together, vitamin B12 and folate may be important in lowering your risk of developing Alzheimer's. A brain-healthy diet will help increase your intake of these vitamins and the trace elements necessary for the body to use them effectively.

British Medical Journal, May 2013 & Alzheimer's Association

A brain-healthy diet is most effective when combined with physical and mental activity and social interaction.

[ALCOHOL ON THE BRAIN?](#)

Difficulty walking blurred vision, slurred speech, slowed reaction times, impaired memory: Clearly, alcohol affects the brain. Alcohol can impair memory after

only a few drinks and, as the amount of alcohol increases, so does the degree of impairment. Large quantities of alcohol, especially when consumed quickly and on an empty stomach, can produce a blackout, or a period of time where a person under the influence of alcohol cannot remember events or details of the event.

NIH National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Functional signs of brain damage from excessive alcohol use in young people include decreased ability in visual learning, memory, and other brain functions.

Also with excessive alcohol use in young people the brain shows signs of shrinking and there are significant changes in white matter - tracts that contain nerve fibers.

Cortex, February 2013

[THE BRAIN AND LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE](#)

Learning a second language requires the brain to create and strengthen new nerve connections in the brain. This is similar to the changes in the brain seen in people learning complex **motor skills**, such as juggling.

*Montreal Neurological Institute,
September 2013*

The logo features the word "Alliance" in a large, bold, black serif font. The letter "i" in "Alliance" is replaced by a black silhouette of two people shaking hands. To the right of "Alliance", the word "Handshake" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a background of vertical grey lines of varying thickness, creating a barcode-like effect.

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