

WAYS TO IMPROVE MEMORY AND BRAIN FUNCTIONALITY NATURALLY

The human brain is very literally one of the most important organs in your body. Without a brain, you cannot exist.

It controls all your voluntary and involuntary functions such as breathing, swallowing, heartbeat, digestion; everything. It is at the core of your being and coordinates your activities, impulses, and reflexes. You can imagine that as a human being, it is vital that you take proper care of your brain. You may also go a step further to improve your brain functionality.

There are actually ways to improve brain function that involve taking brain-boosting drugs. Many scientists take them and even advocate for them. They believe that as a competent adult, you should be allowed to take these brain enhancement drugs such as adderall, ritalin, or provigil. These sound great and very lofty, but why do pharmaceutical cognitive enhancers (brain boosters) when you can go about improving your brain functionality in very natural ways?

There are three categories of natural brain and memory enhancers: lifestyle habits, nutrition, and games.

Lifestyle Habits

Incorporating the habits to be listed below into your lifestyle and routine will help increase brain activity and all-round physical and mental wellness:

- **Exercise:** This makes the first on the list for very obvious reasons. There is an established link between physical exercise and brain function. Exercise helps to get your blood flowing which in turn provides your brain with the oxygen and nutrients it needs to function well. Research proves that exercise working the leg muscles has a higher effect on brain function. So, running on a treadmill, riding a stationary bike, or a mobile one, running, jogging, all help increase blood flow to the hippocampus which is responsible for memory retention.
- **Yoga and Meditation:** These activities are very calming and relaxing and help to soothe the brain muscles. About 10-15 minutes of meditation daily will calm your brain and also helps to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and confusion. It also helps with brain inflammation. You have no idea the world of good you do for your brain and memory when you are relaxed!
- **Good Sleep:** For an activity so simple and natural, sleep is grossly underrated. Do not join the wagon of people who think sleep is laziness and staying up all night makes you optimal and hardworking. Like meditation, sleep is a form of relaxation for the brain.

You are allowing your brain to heal and reset. It is understandable that because of work and other responsibilities, a lot of people do not get enough sleep. However, the importance needs to be reemphasized. At least 6 hours of sleep every day, as well as power naps in the afternoon, is highly recommended by healthcare professionals. You can also try a few things before you sleep such as journaling the activities of your day or writing down things that may have upset you that day, shutting off mobile devices, and giving your eyes a break from the light of your phone or other devices.

- **Learn something new:** It is never too late to put your brain to the test by learning a new thing. From learning a new instrument to trying an old hobby you always wanted. It may be canoeing, maybe? Fencing? Learning a new language or learning to cook new meals. The brain feels exercised every time you go through the process of learning something new, and it potentially can prevent you from having a neurodegenerative disease. Science junk aside, learning new stuff is exciting and relaxing. Take a break from routines.
- **Physical Interactions:** Hanging out with people (that you actually like) can help boost your brain activity, especially when you have interesting conversations with these people. When you socialize, you put your brain to work, but not stressful work. Get it? Sexual activity is also proven to boost memory and brainpower.

Nutrition

Maintaining a balanced diet and incorporating it into your lifestyle is a very sure way to improve your brain and memory power. Apart from remembering to eat breakfast daily and maintaining proper portion control, the types of food you eat matter.

Vegetables/ leafy greens: Leafy greens support brain health because they contain glucosinolates, which when broken down help reduce stress. They also contain important antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals to boost brain health and lower the risk of cognitive decline. Examples are kale, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, spinach, and collards

Fatty/ Oily fish: Fatty fish is a source of Omega-3 fatty acids which are healthy unsaturated fats linked to brain boost and lower chances of having dementia, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and slow mental decline. You should eat fish that are low in mercury like cod, salmon, mackerel, tuna, pollock, and sardines.

Berries: Berries have flavonoids, which is the natural plant pigment responsible for their hues and also helps to improve memory. The antioxidants in berries can help to reduce inflammation in the body, improve communication between brain cells, and boost learning and memory. Studies have also shown that blueberries in particular help to protect the brain from damage.

Other important foods for brain function include chocolates, coffee and tea, fruits, nuts & seeds, and grains.

Games

Examples of games that can help improve brain function, as a result of deep thinking and reasoning include:

- Chess
- Crossword puzzles
- Sudoku
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Numerous online games specifically created to increase brain function and memory.

How To Improve Memory

A lot of the recommendations for improving memory are similar or the same as those listed above for brain function such as exercise, eating healthy food, sleep, with a few exceptions. Here are some of those exceptions:

Mindfulness: Mindfulness, which is a mental state in which you are fully aware of yourself, the current situation, and your environment is a great habit to adopt. It is a form of meditation, but where meditation is formal, mindfulness is mental. Mindfulness has been proven to improve memory and concentration while reducing stress.

Reduce sugar intake: Excessive sugar intake is already bad for your health, but research has shown that it can also lead to poor memory and reduced brain volume.

Stay Organized: Organisation makes it easier for a person to remember things. You can try keeping checklists in a book or on your phone to help you keep track of what you do and help yourself remember things easily, thereby improving your memory.

Reduce alcohol and hard drug intake: Like excessive sugar, taking too much alcohol can be very bad for the human body but it also has negative impacts on your memory. Drug addiction and alcoholism can alter your brain functionality and result in memory deficits.

Healthy living is attainable, and when your brain and memory are in good condition, you have little to worry about immediately and in the future.