

- Exercise / Habit / Socialization

Five tips to look after your brain

West Lothian Courier · 7 Nov 2024 · 15

Exercise Regular physical activity is beneficial for brain health

Most people worry about their risk of brain disease as they do about cancer or heart disease, but research shows they're less aware of how to protect their brains.

There are many lifestyle changes to help boost brain health:

1. Build on current habits

Only half of Brits say they actively look after their brain health, yet 89 per cent already do something that helps it. The best thing is to continue learning, so instead of doing the crossword you've done every day for 10 years, pick up a new skill or hobby. Increase good habits and read and write regularly to help your brain health.

2. Keep body and brain active

Regular physical activity helps with strength, flexibility and balance and increases blood flow to the brain, promoting the growth of new brain cells and connections. Aerobic exercises improve brain activity and reduce the risk of neurodegenerative disease while strength training can improve mood and sleep.

3. Make it your business

Keep up with all the latest research and help future proof yourself through diet, good sleeping habits, reducing alcohol and keeping stress to a minimum. You can help yourself and find a helpful routine that works for you.

4. Prick up your ears

Get your hearing checked if you have any concerns about it. Nearly double the number of people with mild hearing loss will develop dementia compared to those without hearing loss, according to the Alzheimer's Society. The risk triples with moderate hearing loss and by nearly five times with severe hearing loss. Hearing aids can help to greatly reduce your risk.

5. Stay in touch.

Socialising helps your brain health, though if you feel lonely or far away from loved ones it can be hard to meet new people. Consider volunteering to help yourself and others. Share your skills – there are local skill swap groups where you could learn something new while teaching others how to change a plug, cook or grow herbs.