

- Memory

How to keep your mind sharp

STRESS, AGING MAY AFFECT MEMORY Enough sleep, healthy diet good for mental performance.

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There are many factors that influence memory and mental performance including stress, illness, aging, tobacco, recreational drugs, toxins, alcohol, a lack of oxygen and a lack of nutrients.

The brain controls the body and makes up the central nervous system, together with spinal cord. The brain power that we seek to improve is our memory, thoughts and feelings.

One of the major symptoms of stress and aging is a reduction in mental performance.

Taking a Vitamin B Complex supplement can aid in reducing stress, as well as the symptoms of memory loss, mental confusion and depression which are associated with a Vitamin B and Folic Acid deficiency.

Healthy nerve fibres benefit greatly from minerals like Sodium, Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium, stimulating the balanced flow of nerve impulses in the brain.

A supplement of Lecithin can help with the production of Choline which is contained in one of the main neurotransmitters in the brain. Vitamin C can aid in the protection against damage from free radicals.

Replacing aluminium cooking utensils with glass will reduce the metal toxicity that can negatively affect the brain and memory.

Exercise improves the flow of oxygen in the blood and deep breathing exercises help to provide extra oxygen to the brain. An increased flow of oxygen to the brain can increase the brain cell's work capacity and improve mental functioning and alertness. During exercise the body's natural opiates called endorphins are released, thereby producing "happy" feelings and counteracting depression. Ginkgo Biloba is a brain tonic that revitalises the mind, body and senses by maintaining healthy circulation and increasing the flow of blood to the brain. Getting enough sleep at night is extremely important for maintaining a healthy brain. While we sleep, our brain goes through a number of cycles.

At stages 3 and 4 of the sleep cycle, memory is consolidated and during dream states, unconscious conflicts are resolved. Factors like stress, alcohol and noise pollution can affect a good night's sleep. The brain is like any other muscle in the body and can deteriorate if not used regularly. Studies have shown that the brain grows new connections between the cells in order to meet demands placed on it by a mentally stimulating environment.

Reading and problem solving skills like puzzles, chess or scrabble can aid in sustaining mental alertness.

Remember that you are what you eat. Improve your brain power and maintain a healthy body by enjoying a sensible and balanced diet containing fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, fish and plenty of fresh water.