- Brain

Clear the haze of brain fog

How to regain mental clarity effectively

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Do you find yourself having difficulty concentrating? Are you struggling to find the right words mid conversation? Are you forgetful? Are you having difficulty trying to understand what you are hearing, reading, or watching? Is your brain slow in processing information? Do you wake up feeling tired? Do you feel mentally exhausted? Like your brain just can't take it anymore and you end up spacing out. Are you sluggish or do you feel hazy or woozy?



Allthesesymptomsarecharacteristics of brain fog. This is not an illness because it is not a medical diagnosis. However, it is cluster of symptoms that affect your cognitive skills and abilities, especially, your mental clarity. Brain fog cannot be cured with medication. Simply because it primarily requires lifestyle and behavioral modifications. However, there is one medical condition that could lead to symptoms of brain fog due to poor quality sleep. If you have no trouble falling asleep and get seven to eight hours of sleep each night yet wake up feeling tired, you have to go and seek the help of a sleep specialist. You need proper assessment for sleep apnea. This is a sleep disorder that needs medical intervention.

An individual with sleep apnea has episodes of breathing cessation during sleep. The individual is usually unaware of this condition but other people may hear very loud snoring and even choking sounds. Individuals who are diagnosed with sleep apnea would be required to use a breathing machine or Positive Airway Pressure Therapy devices. Patients who are overweight or obese will be advised to undergo weight management.

If you do not have sleep apnea and still have poor sleep quality due to not prioritizing sleep and rest, you have to assess what causes you to lose sleep. Is it psychological stress, overworking due to

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poor time management or unreasonable demands, night eating disorder, bedtime procrastination that manifests through doom scrolling, binge watching, and other activities? You need to get to the bottom of why you are not getting good quality sleep. Only then can you make the necessary adjustments to promote good quality sleep, optimum rest, and recovery for better mental clarity.

It would help to have a bedtime routine. Practice sleep hygiene by having a downtime 30 to 60 minutes before you are scheduled to go to sleep. Avoid eating a heavy meal for dinner. Do not exercise three hours before bedtime. Do not drink or eat anything that has caffeine at least four hours before sleep. Take a warm bath, wear comfortable clothing, and keep the room cool and comfortable.

Set aside digital devices at least 30 minutes to one hour before bedtime. Read a book, listen to soft music, begin to pray, meditate, and practice deep breathing exercises to calm down. You can drink chamomile or lavender tea, as well as use essential oils if available. You can use a sleep mask or ear plugs if you share a room with others who do not go to bed at the same time as you. If you are anxious, you can use a weighted blanket to calm your nerves. Never check the news or your finances during bedtime!

If sleep is not corrected, it leads to poor food choices and cravings that will further worsen symptoms of brain fog. Poor quality and inadequate sleep cause the ghrelin hormone to rise. This hormone stimulates appetite and intensifies cravings for sweets. Sugary stuff will cause spikes in your blood sugar. Giving you that sudden burst of energy, which won't last for long. You will eventually crash and feel worse.

Another common thing that people resort to is caffeine. They get that much needed energy boost and, just like the effect of sugar, crash and feel the symptoms of brain fog all over again. Instead of relying on sugar and caffeine, get into the habit of eating full meals at the right time, even when you are not hungry. Increase your fiber intake from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains like brown, black or red rice, oats, quinoa, and adlai.

Fiber will prevent spikes in your blood sugar but the carbohydrates from these plant food sources will give you enough energy to sustain your activities. Caffeine is not so bad. It has health benefits. However, relying on too much coffee, especially if the drink has added fat and sugar, will work against you in the long run. It is detrimental to your overall health.

Go ahead and have a cup of black coffee in the morning with your breakfast or brunch. Then have black tea or green tea in the afternoon. They have less caffeine content. If you pair the tea with a fresh fruit for an afternoon snack, you will still obtain that energy boost that you need to combat brain fog, the kind of energy that will not make you crash so quickly.

Aside from food, substances like alcohol and smoking can also reduce mental clarity and worsen symptoms of brain fog due to the toxins they contain that increase oxidative stress, as well as, narrow arteries. Thus, causing poor blood circulation and less brain oxygenation.

Being physically inactive, sitting down most of the time, will also lead to poor blood circulation and poor oxygenation. After all, sitting is now considered the new smoking. If you are having symptoms of brain fog, begin to stand up several times a day, take 10- to 15-minute walks, two to three times a day. You can walk in place, walk around the room or house, or walk outside. Just get moving and witness your mental status become better.

Lastly, do a digital detox. Consuming too much information digitally will not only strain your eyes but will affect your entire wellbeing. Set a timer when you are consuming content online. Rest for some time and do something productive or nurturing to yourself and the people around you.

Say goodbye to brain fog and have a better mental clarity through behavior modification and lifestyle change.