



THE TOTAL BRAIN HEALTH® BLUEPRINT

The Total Brain Health® Blueprint is an action plan for addressing the two major goals of leading a brain fit life -- boosting everyday performance and promoting long-term brain vitality.

Based on over three decades of research evidence, the TBH Blueprint gives people of all ages simple, specific actions they can take to bring the science of brain health into their daily lives.

The TBH Blueprint is supported by actions within three “pillars” or dimensions of well-being: Body, Mind and Spirit. The plan targets each of these essential areas through clear steps we can take to enhance daily intellectual performance and reduce dementia risk.

DIMENSION | BODY

MOVE IT

- *Aerobic exercise boosts the brain’s physical health, sharpens intellectual performance, and has been shown to lower dementia risk.*
- *Regular aerobic activity may contribute to the building of a protective buffer against memory loss, often referred to as “metabolic reserve.”*
- *Keeping physically fit helps prevent obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic conditions that in turn can increase dementia risk.*

EAT SMART

- *Sticking to a healthy diet—and maintaining a healthy weight—is key to a healthy brain. In addition, studies have linked too much body fat, especially in the belly, with an increased risk of dementia.*
- *Following a patterned diet that’s high in brain-healthy foods—especially cold-water fish and other sources of omega 3-fats, and fruits and veggies that are rich in antioxidants—has been associated with a lower risk of dementia. The Mediterranean diet is a great example of this approach to eating.*
- *Diet matters to everyday performance: Alcohol, caffeine, and sugar can have a short-term impact on focus and memory, so it’s important to balance them as we age.*



LIVE WITH YOUR BRAIN IN MIND

- *Simple lifestyle choices we make daily can affect our brain health in the short-term over years to come.*
- *How much sleep we get, the medications we take, and other routine decisions can have a significant impact on daily memory.*
- *Other aspects of daily life—how we take care of our health overall, manage chronic conditions, or protect ourselves from head injury—can be important factors in future brain health.*

DIMENSION | MIND

SHARPEN SKILLS

- *Research shows that cognitive training can revive skills that diminish with age, such as attention, quick thinking, multi-tasking, short-term memory, and reasoning—and that some of these benefits can last at least ten years.*
- *Timed activities—playing games against the clock—can help to maintain intellectual skills.*

STRETCH YOUR MIND

- *Staying intellectually engaged and keeping your mind active is one of the most effective ways to guard against dementia.*
- *Challenging the brain—to learn new things, to be creative, to think “outside of the box”—has been linked to the growth of new neurons (brain cells) and synapses (the pathways between brain cells).*
- *The emergence of fresh brain cells and synapses may create a “cognitive reserve” that helps protect the brain from memory loss.*

STRATEGIZE

- *Even the healthiest brain can’t remember everything; memory-boosting strategies and tools can rescue us from recall malfunctions.*
- *The most important of these are organizational tools such as datebooks and “to do” lists that keep information in order, and memorization strategies that help information to stick “in our heads.”*
- *Research shows that the more different memory strategies we master, the better able we are to remember what we need to on a daily basis.*

DIMENSION | SPIRIT

SOCIALIZE

- *A robust social life can contribute greatly to brain health.*
- *Spending time with others is a prime brain workout, as it requires focus, quick thinking, and memory skills, and often involves activities that are intellectually engaging.*
- *Social support lowers depression risk and emotional distress, which can interfere with learning and memory.*



KEEP EMOTIONAL BALANCE

- *When emotions run high—or low—mental function, as well as long-term brain health, can suffer.*
- *Stress can be distracting, making it tough to focus and remember. Also, some studies suggest that chronic stress may cause the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved in learning and memory, to shrink.*
- *Activities that require mindfulness, such as meditation, can help realign our attention and relieve emotional distress. In fact, according to some research, meditation may actually help to improve brain health and even slow the progression Alzheimer’s disease.*

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

- *Studies suggest that when we feel confident that our brains are healthy and our cognitive abilities are up to par, we’re better able to meet intellectual challenges, and more likely to engage in brain-boosting activities.*
- *Confidence in intellectual abilities, especially memory, improves performance.*
- *Research shows that memory training leads to better memory self-efficacy, or confidence in our ability to remember.*