



Get Moving and Boost your Brain Power

Have you ever considered the payoffs you could get by making the simple choice to get up and get moving?

The Brain Boosting Benefits of Physical Activity

Studies show physical activity often corresponds with positive improvements in many key areas of life. Typically, people who are physically active eat healthier and smoke less. They usually report less stress, more patience with family members and co-workers and feel better about their lives in general. Physical activity is even correlated with fewer credit card purchases and financial stability. Want to improve your memory or ramp up your ability to learn and process information? Get physically active at least 30 minutes on most days of the week!

Get Moving For Life

If that's not enough to move you to action, consider what physical activity can do for your long-term brain health. It can help reduce your risk of stroke, which is the fifth-leading cause of death in America and the No. 1 preventable cause of disability. Yet, with healthy habits you can exercise an incredible amount of control over your own risks.

Stay Sharp

When compared to people with low levels of physical activity, people who exercise are less likely to develop problems linked with cognitive decline or dementia that is often associated with aging and disease. Exercise gets your heart pumping which helps keep your brain cells fully supplied with oxygen, nutrition and energy. In addition, physically active people tend to have more receptors in their brain's neural network which makes for better mental processing. Physically active people have less brain shrinkage as they age. They even have a greater ability to generate fresh brain cells – a process called neurogenesis – well into their senior years. You truly have to use it or lose it. While physical activity jumpstarts your brain activity, it helps keep your heart healthy, too.

Regular Aerobic Physical Activity May Help You to:

- Improve blood cholesterol
- Manage diabetes
- Combat obesity
- Control blood pressure
- Lengthen your life
- Improve your quality of life as you age

Your Stroke Prevention Plan

These factors are key points in your stroke prevention plan. If you're thinking, "Prevention plan? What prevention plan?" then it is a good time to let us help you build an easy strategy to help reduce your chances of having a stroke. As research continues to unfold, we are learning that almost no one stays healthy by accident.

Get Started Today: Put One Foot In Front of the Other

Take the first step by briskly walking if you are able. It's free, easy and when you have a walking companion, you're more likely to stay motivated. There is a direct relationship between physical inactivity and stroke. If you're no "spring chicken" it's not too late to start being physically active. The award for the greatest potential for improvement and reduced mortality goes to ... the couch potato who becomes moderately active*. So, get up and get going. Our lives and bodies are truly shaped by our habits. We know that the earlier you begin to mobilize after stroke the better you will do in recovery. We caution, that if you have weakness on one side of your body, speak with your doctor about physical activity and exercise to make sure that what you undertake is safe for you.

I'm ready. Where do I start?

Join the "movement" now. As long as you aren't suffering from a chronic condition, chances are good that you can start now, but again, check with your doctor or physical therapist before engaging in physical activity or exercise. Even people with heart conditions or previous strokes are generally encouraged to exercise with prescribed limits and precautions. Just make sure to check with your doctor beforehand.

How much is enough?

Research shows that at least 160 minutes per week of moderate physical activity packs a powerful punch for stroke prevention. But if you've been sedentary, just start where you can. It's also OK to break up your exercise into three 10-minute chunks for at least 30 minutes a day for five of the seven days in a week.

What does 'moderate physical activity' mean?

Choose an aerobic activity you like; one that increases your heart rate. It may be brisk walking, dancing, raking leaves or any of dozens of other activities that increases blood flow and causes you to feel warm, break a sweat and breathe heavily without causing you to gasp or feel a burning sensation in your muscles.

Celebrate Your Strategy & Feel the Benefits

Whether you choose a structured exercise program or simply find small ways to make movement a part of your daily routine, any type of exercise in at least 10 minute segments adds up to a healthier circulatory system and brain. When you take time to notice that you feel more energized and mentally alert, you're more likely to feel successful and get up and do it again tomorrow.

Physical Activity, You and a Healthier Nation

Stroke is largely preventable, treatable and beatable, so let's get moving. Start walking with a friend today and celebrate your health for years to come. One day at a time, one healthy habit at a time, we're building a nation free from the ravages of stroke. Lace up your shoes and get started now!

Source: Harvard Health

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