

# HELP SENIORS STAY SHARP

CAREGIVERS



Senior Brain Health

## How Seniors Can Protect Brain Health

*Like any part of the body, the brain changes over time. Seniors can protect their brain health both physically and mentally.*

Since the brain wears with age, it's normal for seniors to have small memory lapses. However, more significant brain issues can also develop. That's why it is important for seniors to protect their brain health physically—and by staying sharp.

### How to Protect the Brain Using Physical Strategies

The brain is an organ. Just like other organs, it's affected by things like your blood pressure and what you eat. Seniors can decrease their risk of brain-related diseases like dementia by taking care of their brains physically.

Important parts of physically protecting brain health include:



Not smoking or drinking excessively



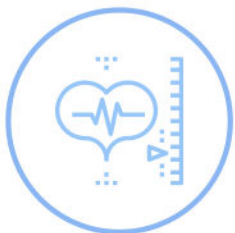
Exercising regularly



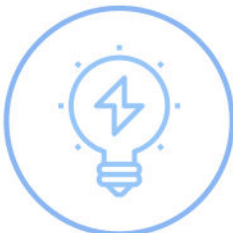
Eating a healthy diet with omega-3 fatty acids



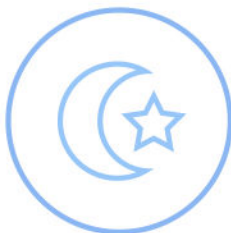
Maintaining a healthy cholesterol and weight



Managing blood pressure problems and stress



Stimulating the brain's functions



Sleeping normal hours and durations

(EverydayHealth)

### MAKE BRAIN CARE FUN



Complete a crossword



Assemble a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle



Build a model



Take up a new hobby



Record stories or memories



Play unfamiliar games online or in person



Drive a new route



Cook a new recipe



Read nonfiction



Learn new song lyrics



Watch mysteries



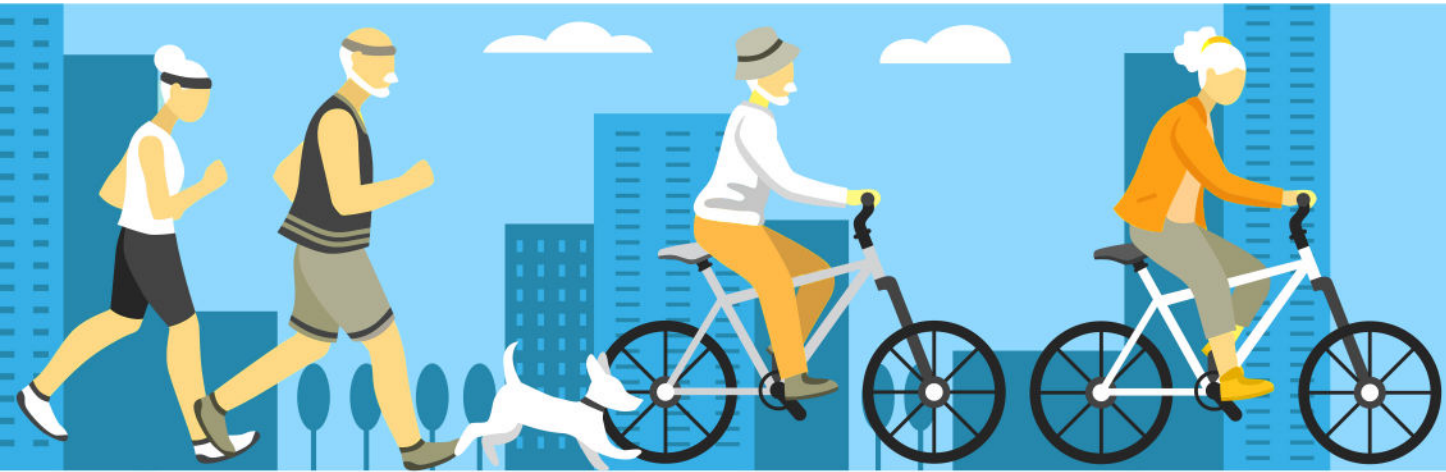
Practice a new language

(OEDB)

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## Tips for Stimulating the Brain to Stay Sharp

Brains need to stay active to remain healthy. Stimulation is essential for the physical brain health of seniors. It also improves mental wellness, decreasing the risk of depression. Use these tips to stay sharp:

- Complete puzzles and mentally-challenging games
- Stay engaged socially
- Learn new things independently or through classes
- Add variety to routines
- Use all 5 senses regularly
- Switch hands for basic tasks
- Have fun while exercising the brain

Sometimes activating the brain feels challenging. But, most of the time, it's just part of having fun and challenging yourself to stay creative and try new things. Brain stimulation is most effective if it's interesting to seniors.

(Alert 1)

## Benefits of a Healthy Brain

Having a healthy brain has its benefits, especially for seniors.

Benefits include:

- A sense of purpose
- Greater independence
- Improved memory
- Reduced risk of depression
- Decreased boredom
- A more positive mood
- Increased concentration

(Positive Life Decisions)



## Home Care Tip

Symptoms of boredom from lack of mental stimulation can be surprising. Instead of recognizing their boredom, many seniors just feel grumpy, lonely, or purposeless. This can lead to appetite, sleep, and mood problems. If you notice these symptoms, try suggesting more mentally-engaging activities.



## Care for the Mind Too

Protecting brain health is about more than memory—seniors are at a greater risk for depression. Staying sharp can add purposefulness to senior's lives, decreasing the chance of depression. However, it is also important for seniors to mentally relax and de-stress. Encourage seniors to meditate, reflect on positive memories, and deal with emotions like sadness or loneliness.