

Ten Steps For Physical And Mental Fitness

The Alliance for Aging Research, a nonprofit organization, recommends following these 10 steps to keep your brain *and* your body in shape.

1. Eat a Brain-Healthy Diet. Diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids (commonly found in fish), protein, antioxidants, fruits and vegetables, and vitamin B; low in trans fats; and with the recommended levels of carbohydrates optimize brain health.

2. Stay Mentally Active. Learning new skills or languages, working on crossword puzzles, taking classes and learning how to dance all challenge and maintain cognitive function.

3. Exercise and Keep Fit. Exercising increases circulation, improves coordination and helps prevent conditions such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which increase the risk of developing dementia.

4. Stay Social. Socializing with friends, volunteering, traveling and doing favorite leisure activities with others keeps the mind active and reduces stress, which can harm brain health.

5. Get Plenty of Sleep. Lack of sleep undermines brain health.

6. Manage Stress. Stress hormones may actually damage—or even kill—brain cells, resulting in loss of the ability to remember and to learn. Relieve daily stress by practicing yoga or by spending time with friends and family.

7. Protect Your Head. Studies show that the more severe the head injury, the higher the risk of developing dementia. Wear protective headgear and seat belts to prevent head injury.

8. Control Other Health Conditions. Maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet and controlling stress can reduce the risk of diseases that affect the brain (e.g., diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure).

9. Avoid Unhealthy Habits. Smoking, heavy drinking and recreational-drug use may increase the risk of dementia and cognitive decline.

10. Consider Your Genes. If your family history indicates a higher risk of loss of mental functions, it's even more important to be proactive about maintaining your brain health. For more information and resources, go to www.agingresearch.org.

Are You Balanced?

How's your balance? Stand with one of your feet 12 inches off the ground and see how long you can maintain the position. You should be able to balance for 24 to 28 seconds if you are between 20 and 49 years of age; 21 seconds if you're between 50 and 59; 10 seconds if you're between 60 and 69; and 4 seconds if you're between 70 and 79.

Balance diminishes with age. And poor balance can set the stage for a nasty fall—a major cause of injury and disability in older adults. Ten to 15 minutes of balance exercises three times a week can help. Try these simple exercises from *Balance: In Search of the Lost Sense* by Scott McCredie. If you aren't so steady on your feet, hold on to a table, chair, or counter for extra support, and make sure someone's on hand to catch you if you start to lose your balance.

1. Squat sit. With a chair behind you, squat as if you were about to sit. Just before your bottom makes contact with the chair, stand back up. Work your way up to ten reps.

2. Heel-to-toe walk. Stand up straight and hold your arms out to the side. Now, place one foot directly in front of the other, with the heel of your front foot touching the toes of your back foot. Practice walking forward and backward in an imaginary straight line.

3. One-leg stand. Balance on one leg while doing everyday tasks, such as brushing your teeth, watching TV, or standing in line.

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Pantry Raid

We all want to have a full pantry of healthful foods. The best-case scenario is that you've been to the farmers market and stocked up on fresh fruit and veggies, lean meat and fish, and other healthy staples. But when someone's polished off the last chicken breast, the fresh blueberries have sprouted green fuzz, and that head of romaine is now a brown puddle at the bottom of the crisper, it's time for Plan B. You can save money and your diet by storing up some nonperishable items for a rainy day. Here's a list of items a healthy pantry shouldn't be without.

Canned Tuna. This is a great source of protein and omega-3 fatty acids—120 calories and 30 grams of protein in one six-ounce can. Try to buy tuna packed in water instead of oil to reduce fat and calories. And look for preparation methods that aren't mayonnaise-based. Other good fish sources include canned salmon, sardines, or anchovies (although you might want to watch the sodium content in these). **Note:** Consuming large amounts of fish, including tuna, can expose you to unhealthy levels of metal contamination (especially mercury), although generally, the benefits of eating fish far outweigh the risks.

Instant Oatmeal. Oatmeal you prepare on the stove is OK, too. But if you're time-challenged, instant is the way to go. Low in fat, high in fiber,

oatmeal is a great filling breakfast or snack. Try to skip the presweetened, flavored oatmeals though. There are also a lot of oatmeals on the market with added ingredients like soy and flaxseed—even healthier!

Protein Powder. Protein powder has a pretty long shelf life, and adding a scoop to your morning oatmeal or smoothie is a great way to pack in some protein when your eggs and cottage cheese are a little past their prime.

Peanut Butter. The best peanut butter will be preservative-free, only contain peanuts, and will have to be refrigerated after being opened. Two tablespoons will give you eight grams of protein, but don't over do it because it is high in fat

Canned Vegetables. Fresh vegetables are usually better, and organic better still, but the downside of getting rid of nasty preservatives in your veggies is that they tend to spoil faster. The only downside to canned veggies besides a mushier texture is the sodium that some brands load their veggies with. Read the label to make sure you're getting the veggies with the least salt.

Canned Fruit. Similar to the veggies, canned fruit is another easy option. Just make sure to avoid fruit that has been packed in syrup. Try to find fruit packed in its own juice.

Legumes. Canned or dried, it's great to have a supply of lentils, pinto beans, kidney beans, low-fat refried beans, and/or garbanzos on hand. As with other vegetables, watch the sodium content in the canned beans.

Broth and Soup. Every good cook should have several cans of chicken, beef, or vegetarian broth on hand—preferably reduced fat and low sodium. Broth is a great way to flavor rice, vegetables, and pasta, and can be used instead of oil or butter to sauté foods. But if the name of the soup begins with

“cream of” it probably isn't the best diet choice.

Whole-Grain Pasta. There has been an encouraging trend in the pasta market, with brands now offering whole-grain versions of the old white-flour standbys. Some brands also include flaxseed, protein, and other healthy stuff.

Tomato Sauce. Tomatoes are full of the antioxidant lycopene, and cooked tomatoes have even more of it than raw tomatoes. Canned tomatoes, sauce, and paste are all great ways to get all the nutrition the tomato packs in. As with all canned food, watch the sodium.

Brown Rice. Rice has an incredibly long shelf life and is easy to prepare, and brown rice and wild rice have lots of fiber.

Nuts. Nuts are a great snack. They're filling and high in omega-3s. They're also high in fat though, so portion control is a must.

Flaxseed. This usually has to be refrigerated after it's been opened, but having ground flaxseed on hand is a great way to add a little fiber and some heart-healthy omega-3s into your diet. You can add a couple of teaspoons to a smoothie, a bowl of soup, or a salad.

Tea. The best tea, healthwise, is probably green tea. But black tea has some healthy properties as well, and herbal teas offer a whole range of benefits.

Condiments. Sometimes the healthiest food is not always the tastiest. Instead of resorting to salt and fats to make a meal more savory, it's good to keep a small army of healthy, flavorful condiments on hand. Vinegars, mustards, and hot sauces are among the many available flavor-izers that can perk up a drab dish without adding additional fat or calories.

adapted from www.beachbody.com

From the Office

Refer a new client and receive a 10 percent discount off your next bill!

All **For Every Body Fitness** classes will be held on Columbus Day, Monday, October 8.

For handcrafted art from the heart, visit www.from-the-heart-pottery.com.

Resources For Good Health

The following government websites are great resources for a wide variety of health information. This is a partial list; more resources are available at www.ahrq.gov/ppip/50plus/resources.htm

General Health Information

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
www.ahrq.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

healthfinder®—Provides electronic information on a wide variety of health topics. Can direct you to medical journals and other publications, clearinghouses, databases, hot lines, medical research, support groups, organizations, and libraries.
www.healthfinder.gov

National Women's Health Information Center
www.4women.gov

Aging

Administration on Aging
www.aoa.gov

National Institute on Aging
www.nia.nih.gov

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
www.health.org

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
www.niaaa.nih.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.drugabuse.gov

Cancer

Cancer Information Service
www.cancer.gov

Depression

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depressionmenu.cfm

Diabetes

Lower Extremity Amputation Prevention Program (LEAP)
www.bphc.hrsa.gov/leap

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
www.niddk.nih.gov

Health Care Coverage

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
www.ahrq.gov/consumer/insuranc.htm

Administration on Aging
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
www.aoa.dhhs.gov/eldfam/elder_rights/health_counseling/health_counseling.asp

Hearing

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
www.nidcd.nih.gov

Heart, Lung, and Blood Diseases

Information Center
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Mental Health

National Institute of Mental Health
National Institutes of Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

Nutrition

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
www.fda.gov

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases
www.osteoporosis.org

Safety and Injury Prevention

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
www.cpsc.gov

Slow...It's The New Fast

You've heard the old saying: Slow and steady wins the race. Well, it may also burn more calories, at least in the long run. Researchers at Maastricht University in the Netherlands concluded that people who engage in moderate physical activity, such as walking and biking, had the highest overall physical activity levels.

Their study of 30 men and women over a two-week period also revealed that those who exercised vigorously for short periods of time compensated for that activity by spending a greater part of their day being sedentary.

Sure, vigorous exercise burns more calories, but the moderate exercisers tended to be more active overall.

Vary Stance to Reduce Knee Strain

Reducing stress and strain on the knees is a good idea, even for those with no history of knee problems.

One study examined how varying foot placement affects the tibio-femoral compressive forces and tensile forces in the cruciate ligaments. Wide-stance squats and leg presses were shown to decrease posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) stress, while a narrow stance significantly increased it, as did placing feet low on the leg-press plate. The angle of the foot (turned out or toes pointed straight ahead) did not significantly affect knee forces.

It is particularly interesting to note that neither exercise, regardless of variation, produced tension in the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), the site most commonly associated with knee problems.

The above articles were adapted from ACE fit tips, www.acefit.com

Recipe of the Month: Roasted Corn, Black Bean, and Mango Salad

You can make this simple salad up to 8 hours ahead of time.

Ingredients

2 teaspoons canola oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups corn kernels (approx 3 ears)
1 large ripe mango (about 1 pound), peeled and diced
1 15-ounce or 19-ounce can black beans, rinsed
1/2 cup chopped red onion
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
3 tablespoons lime juice
1 small canned chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, drained and chopped
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring for 30 seconds. Stir in corn and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 8 minutes. Transfer the corn mixture to a large bowl. Stir in mango, beans, onion, bell pepper, lime juice, chipotle, cilantro, cumin, and salt.

Nutrition Information (per half-cup serving): 125 calories; 2 g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 26 g carbohydrate; 4 g protein; 4 g fiber; 245 mg sodium; 223 mg potassium.



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