



LIGHTER
BRIGHTER!
you!

THE AGEING BRAIN AND SECRETS OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

WHEN PEOPLE SPEAK ABOUT OUR BRAINS GETTING OLDER, they mostly focus on the negative part of ageing. Of course, the neurons in our brain do stop working as efficiently as they did when we were young, in the same way, that our skin gets wrinkles. We can't avoid ageing, but there is good news about the ageing brain because it can continue to form connections between neurons, and the amount and health of these connections rely on our choices.

WE CAN'T STOP THE BRAIN FROM AGEING BUT ...

Ageing is in our DNA, but we can slow down the decline by ensuring that we do everything in our power to keep our neurons and the connections between them as healthy as possible. And this includes what we eat, how often we move, and whether we engage meaningfully with the world around us and those in our community. We have control over all these aspects of our lives, and they directly impact our brain health as we age.

WHAT HARMS THE BRAIN AS WE GET OLDER?

Every day our neurons produce energy to keep our brain, our greediest organ, functioning well. Unfortunately, this energy also produces what are called 'free radicals.' As we get older, the mitochondria in the brain that produce this energy become less efficient at doing so, and the free radicals multiply at a faster rate.

The blood-brain barrier (BBB), which separates the body and the brain, with the aim of preventing toxic compounds from crossing into the brain, also becomes less efficient with age. Therefore, inflammatory compounds, which may be circulating in our blood supply, more readily cross this barrier and can cause damage within the brain.

Nutrient deficiencies and digestive challenges also impact brain health, as the brain needs a variety of nutrients for optimal function, including antioxidants from our food, to prevent these free radicals from causing damage.

WHAT ABOUT SLEEP?

Sleep allows the brain to rest and clean itself, which gets rid of all the debris that accumulates from energy production during the day. Neurons shrink as we fall into a deep sleep, and cerebrospinal fluid then washes over our neurons to flush away the waste. Optimal sleep supports this process, but as we get older, we can sleep less deeply. It's therefore imperative to focus on getting good, deep sleep to keep your brain clean and healthy.



MOVE FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Research shows clearly that those who are more physically active also have healthier brains, and one of the reasons for this is that exercise helps the heart get stronger, which supports consistent oxygen and blood flow to the brain. So, when you move your body, oxygen and blood flow increase to your brain, which also means a consistent nutrient supply if your diet is optimal too. The more varied your exercise, the more places in the brain oxygen and blood flow to, so vary your movement while engaging with others to get extra benefits.

ENGAGE ALL YOUR SENSES FOR A HEALTHY BRAIN (AND BODY)

We need to ensure what we see and hear stays clear, even if we need glasses and a hearing aid because all our senses provide information to our brain. Nutrient-dense food, movement, and full sensory engagement with our world will keep us living healthily into old age! Prevention is always better than attempting a cure!

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