



Chapter 3: Brain Health

Author's Note

The information on this website, including all texts, graphics, images is provided to describe my pursuit of an expanded healthspan. My journey may not be appropriate for your individual circumstances. While I encourage all to have a strategy to expand their healthspan please develop your path in concert with your physician.

Harvard and Mayo Speak Out!



Mayo Clinic: Dietary supplements don't reduce dementia risk

"Forget about those over-the-counter products that promise better memory.

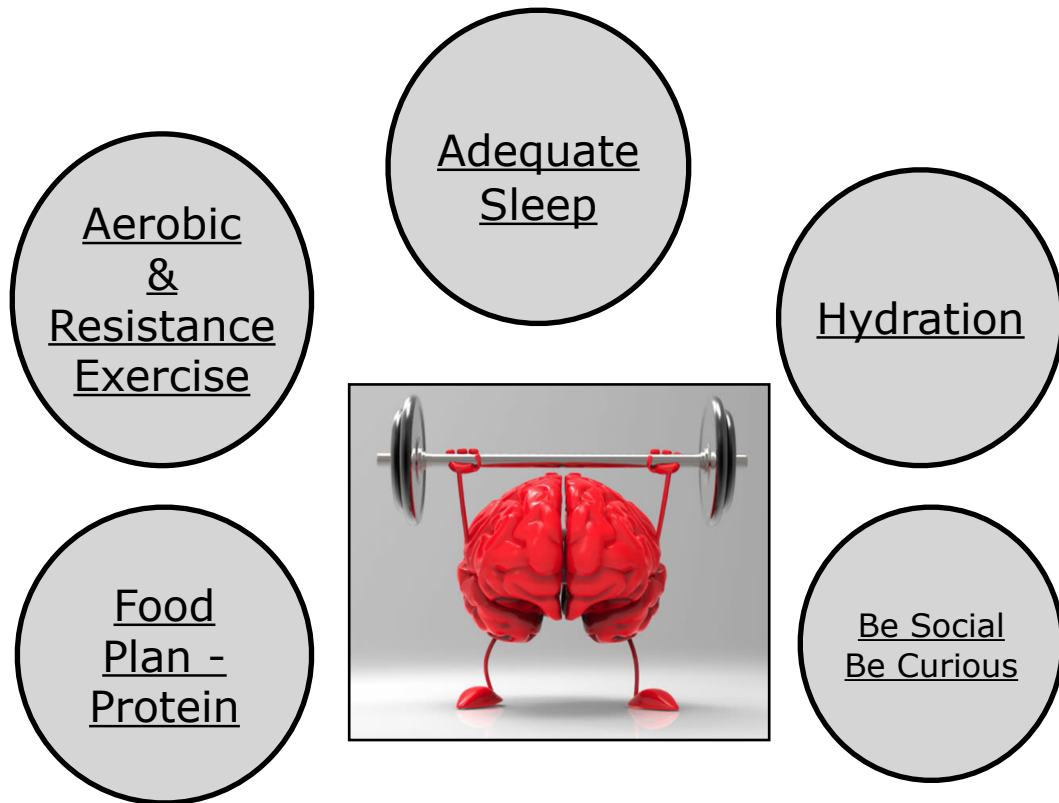
A recent survey found that about 25% of adults over age 50 take a supplement to improve their brain health with the promise of enhanced memory and sharper attention and focus.

The problem? There's no solid proof any of them work.

The main issue with all over-the-counter supplements is lack of regulation. The FDA doesn't oversee product testing or ingredient accuracy — they just look out for supplements that make health claims related to the treatment of specific diseases.

In terms of brain health, this means a supplement manufacturer can claim a product helps with mental alertness or memory loss — but not that it protects against or improves dementia or Alzheimer's disease. This way manufacturers don't have to back up any claim that their product is effective."

The Real Brain Defenses



Currently there is no “magic pill” to address dementia risk as we age. However, displayed above are an array of healthy alternatives to chip away at it. **Click on each circle above to open a webpage to provide more information on the subject material.**

On the next two pages you will read a Harvard Health article on cognitive reserve and the six cornerstones to achieve it.

What is cognitive reserve?



You can think of cognitive reserve as your brain's ability to improvise and find alternate ways of getting a job done. It reflects how agile your brain is in pulling in skills and capacities to solve problems and cope with challenges. Cognitive reserve is developed by a lifetime of education and curiosity.

The concept of cognitive reserve originated in the late 1980s, when researchers described individuals with no apparent symptoms of dementia who were nonetheless found at autopsy to have brain changes consistent with advanced Alzheimer's disease. These individuals did not show symptoms of the disease while they were alive because they had a large enough cognitive reserve to offset the damage and continue to function as usual.

Since then, research has shown that people with greater cognitive reserve are better able to stave off symptoms of degenerative brain changes associated with dementia or other brain diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, or a stroke. A more robust cognitive reserve can also help you function better for longer if you're exposed to unexpected life events, such as stress,

surgery, or toxins in the environment. Such circumstances demand extra effort from your brain—similar to requiring a car to engage another gear.

The heart of our brain health and cognitive fitness program, however, involves lifestyle changes.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School have identified six cornerstones to any effective brain health and cognitive fitness program.

Step 1: Eat a plant-based diet

Step 2: Exercise regularly

Step 3: Get enough sleep

Step 4: Manage your stress

Step 5: Nurture social contacts

Step 6: Continue to challenge your brain

These factors are equal parts of a cohesive plan—they don't work in isolation. Simply eating more fiber or adding a morning walk to your routine isn't enough to forestall mental decline. Instead, exercise, diet, sleep, stress management, social interaction, and mental stimulation work in concert to yield results.

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