

March 2022 Health Yourself Boost Your Brain Challenge

Food for Thought...

- •One out of three cases of Alzheimer's can be prevented through lifestyle changes
- •Brain impairment can start 20-30 years before symptoms begin
- •You can build a better brain- with improved memory, cognitive function, and mood- at any age!

"Think of a historical building that still stands... Had it not been cared for throughout the decades, the wear and tear of weather and constant use would have certainly caused its deterioration and dilapidation. But with routine maintenance and occasional renovations, it not only withstood the test of time, but is likely celebrated for its beauty, significance, and prominence. The same holds true for your brain, which is just another structure of different components and input needs for general maintenance and upkeep." Sanjay Gupta, Keep Sharp

Join Health Yourself this spring in a quest to unlock your brain power- now and well into the future!

When: February 28- April 3

What: 5 weeks of habits designed to spark better brain health for a lifetime of staying sharp

Why: There are things we can do today to improve our quality of life and that of those around us far into our future

How: Just use the following weekly logs to focus on 'brain boosting' habits. Each one is a little different to keep you on your toes!

HY points and prizes: Active participation throughout the challenge will earn employees 15 points toward the reward and enter them in prize drawings. For 5 bonus points, employees can complete a free course from AlzU.com. Simply join for free, take their initial 5 minute survey, and begin a course of your choice. Submit proof of completion to claim these points.

Return your completed challenge to Jess Brown by April 11 to qualify for points and prizes.



Boost Your Brain Challenge Cheat Sheet:

Here are some tips to help you achieve the most success with our weekly habit logs.

- Move more: Most of us want to aim to get about 30 minutes of cardio exercise a day. But if you have been completely sedentary, start with 10 minutes a day of burst exercise (30 seconds of maximal effort and 90 seconds of recovery) and work up to 20 minutes. If you already get 30 minutes, can you add on a little extra or change up your movement?
- Magnify your muscles: ideally you'd get 2-3 days of strength training in a week. Don't forget to stop
 to notice how strong you feel afterwards! No need for a gym membership- check out the many <u>bodyweight</u> options online.
- **Pick your portions:** begin on the conservative side of your first portion of food in a meal, make sure you are drinking enough water, and then reassess whether you are still hungry after eating slowly and mindfully. Can you stop when your stomach feels about 80% full?

BOOST

YOUR BRAIN

- Slash your sugar: some added-sugar bombs include.... Packaged sweets, beverages, sweetened yogurt, sauces, cereal, and packaged fruits.
- Hone your hydration: Make sure you are drinking water throughout the day to produce clear to light yellow urine.
- Plan like a pro: avoid poor food choices by having nutrient dense meals and snacks prepared or planned.
- **Fill up on fiber**: Consuming fibrous foods will not only keep you full, improve digestion, but also benefits heart health... and what's good for the heart is good for the brain since both systems rely upon healthy vascularization.
- Love to learn: Choose activities that involve complexity, learning new skills, and expanding your mind- not just with 'brain games' and crosswords. Joining a class, reading materials outside of your professional interests, learning a new language, are great places to start.
- **Sleep soundly:** improve the quality of your sleep by setting aside at least 7 hours for restful sleep- in a dark, quiet, and cool location. Go to bed and get up at roughly the same time each day, and set aside the last hour of your day for something calming and without screens.
- Slash the salt: in research that combined the DASH diet (notably low in sodium) and the Mediterranean diet, those following these dietary guidelines measurably prevented cognitive decline and reduced their risk for Alzheimer's disease.
- Connect to protect: intentionally engage in relationships and community. Examples might include calling old friends, making exercise dates with local peers, participating in programs that allow you to learn or pass along skills, volunteering, and even going out of your way to connect with strangers in everyday life.
- Relax and restore: engage in activities that help you relax during waking hours- like meditation, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, decluttering your environments, allowing time to daydream, reading, or even watching or listening to a funny show. Whatever you choose, make sure to avoid multi-tasking while doing it!



Name:	

Did you know... More than anything else, exercise is considered the best behavioral activity to trigger biological effects that help the brain. Make movement the foundation of your brain boosting activities and see how you feel.

Brain Boosters	Move More	Magnify your	Pick your Portions	Opt for Omega-3s	Slash Sugar	Hone your Hydration
Answer Yes or No	Did you incorporate more or varied movement into today?	Muscles Did you spend at least 15 minutes strength-training?	Did you eat until about 80% full?	Did you incorporate omega 3's from fish, nuts, seeds, and oils?	Did you limit added sugars today?	Did you 'water' your body throughout the day?
Monday	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes
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Did you know... our brains are 73% water. Even just 2% dehydration affects attention, memory and other cognitive skills. A little bit of water throughout your day goes a long way!

Brain Boosters	Move More	Plan like a Pro	Fill up on Fiber	Opt for Omega-3s	Slash Sugar	Hone your Hydration
Answer Yes or No	Did you incorporate more or varied movement into today?	Did you have healthy foods available before resorting to 'emptier' calories?	Did you eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains?	Did you incorporate omega 3's from fish, nuts, seeds, and oils?	Did you limit added sugars today?	Did you 'water' your body throughout the day?
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Did you know... marketed 'brain games' do little to stimulate brain function compared to truly cognitively stimulating activities- like learning a new language, attending and participating in a class, learning how to cook or paint, or taking up a new musical instrument.

Brain Boosters	Move More	Love to Learn	Magnify your	Sleep Soundly	Slash Salt	Fill up on Fiber
Answer Yes or No	Did you incorporate more or varied movement into today?	Did you participate in a cognitively stimulating activity?	Muscles Did you spend at least 15 minutes strength-training?	Did you make time and space for adequate sleep?	Did you limit high sodium foods from packages, cans, and prepared options?	Did you eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains?
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Did you know... Sleep is different from rest- and we need both! Sleep is the 'rinse cycle' of our brains- allowing our body to clear toxic waste from our lymphatic system that contribute to amyloid brain plaques. Sleep facilitates better memory, learning, and processing of the day. Our mental wellbeing also depends on including activities into our waking lives that offer rest and relaxation.

Brain Boosters	Move More	Love to Learn	Connect to Protect	Sleep Soundly	Relax and Restore	Bonus activity
Answer Yes or No	Did you incorporate more or varied movement into today?	Did you participate in a cognitively stimulating activity?	Did you take time to invest in social connections today?	Did you make time and space for adequate sleep?	Did you take time in your waking hours to relax and unplug?	Did you complete one of the emailed suggested activities?
Monday	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes	□Yes
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Did you know... you can keep it simple- what is good for your body is good for your brain. To maintain neurogenesis- the ability to grow new brain cells and make new neural connections- you want to support good vascularization by staying healthy overall.

Brain Boosters	Move More	Love to Learn	Connect to Protect	Opt for Omega-3s	Relax and Restore	Bonus activity
Answer Yes or No	Did you incorporate more or varied movement into today?	Did you participate in a cognitively stimulating activity?	Did you take time to invest in social connections today?	Did you incorporate omega 3's from fish, nuts, seeds, and oils?	Did you take time in your waking hours to relax and unplug?	Did you complete one of the emailed suggested activities?
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