



## Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

### Using cardio to beat Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease hits close to home. It is an immensely challenging experience to watch a loved one suffer from cognitive decline. Alzheimer's currently affects more than five million people in the United States, and with the growth of the demographic over the age 65, that figure is expected to double within 20 years.

Alzheimer's is a condition in which gradual mental impairment progressively destroys the function of the brain. The mechanism of this degeneration is the cells' connections or the cells themselves dying in key areas of the brain. It mainly affects memory, and the victim becomes confused. As time passes, severity increases. When the condition becomes extreme, people lose themselves

psychologically and behaviorally and can become a whole new person.

While Alzheimer's was once regarded as an aspect of the aging brain, contemporary science has found there are behaviors that can shield you from developing the disease or slow the decline.

Exercise is critical.

There is no longer any argument about exercise promoting brain function. From mitigating depression to enhancing scholarly performance, exercise is undoubtedly a way to get an easy brain boost. This is especially true in older adults who exercise regularly. Research has found larger volumes in the hippocampus of those who exercise. The hippocampus is an area of the brain linked to memory and cognition.

It is now understood that degenerative conditions can also be slowed — if not prevented — with exercise.

This finding was illustrated in a University of Kansas study where they pinned two groups of people diagnosed in the early stages of Alzheimer's. They then had each group do one of either exercise program: a walking program of 150 minutes per week or a stretching and "toning" class a few times per week. They stayed with the program for six months.

The results were encouraging for aerobic exercise as a means of treatment for

this condition. Many of the walkers improved their cognition and showed increased volumes in the hippocampi. It must be noted, however, that the improvements were not all-inclusive and some people didn't show much improvement. This could be due to the disease having varying degrees of severity.

Interestingly, the toning and stretching group showed no improvement at all. In fact many followed the pattern of decline. This is a testament to the modality of exercise being important for the treatment.

Aerobic exercise is absolutely a recipe for better brain health — powerful enough that it may even help treat degenerative disorders. The current recommendation for aerobic exercise is a moderate pace for 150 minutes per week. Depending on where someone is starting, this would be a brisk walk, bike ride, or hike for 30 minutes five days a week. The benefits don't stop at the brain; nearly every bodily function can be improved with a moderate aerobic exercise. Boost the brain, the body, and the soul and go for a walk today.

## Feed the Outlaws to raise funds for school

The Sisters Elementary School Parent-Teacher Community (SPTC) is inviting parents, friends, and community members to pick a date, pick a restaurant, and help raise funds for Sisters Elementary School.

From lunchtime Monday, April 10 through dinner Wednesday, April 12, diners can pick a different restaurant in town and a portion of their sales will be donated to the SPTC in support of various Family Nights and Teacher Grants at Sisters Elementary School.

Each Feed the Outlaws participating restaurant has a dedicated time and meal of which 5 percent will be donated to the SPTC. Diners are encouraged to tell restaurant staff they are there to "Feed the Outlaws!" The schedule is as follows:

Monday, April 10 from 2 to 5 p.m. diners can enjoy Hop N' Brew's Happy Hour Menu; and from 5 to 8 p.m. stop in at Sisters Saloon for dinner.

Tuesday, April 11 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. patrons can enjoy The Depot Café's lunch menu; and from 5 to 8 p.m. have dinner at Three Creeks Brewing Company.

Wednesday, April 12 from 3 to 7 p.m. stop in at Sisters' newest restaurant, The Rainwater Café, for take-n-bake pizza and then from 5 to 8 p.m. enjoy dinner at Rancho Viejo.

"This is a new event for our community and school," said Erin Borla a volunteer with the Sisters Parent-Teacher Community. "What a great way to enjoy a family meal out at a local restaurant and support our school in the process! A special thanks to the many restaurants in the Sisters community who offered to help out with this new event."

For more information on Feed the Outlaws or the Sisters Parent-Teacher Community at Sisters Elementary School contact Borla at 541-480-5994.

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