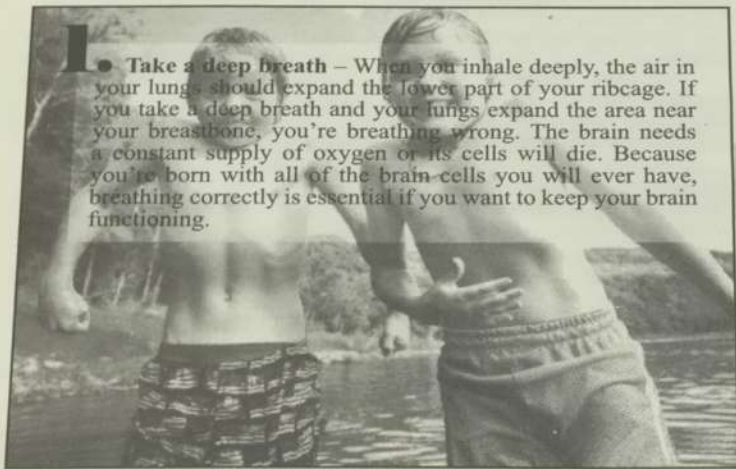


10 Steps to a Healthy Brain

- Compiled by Kimberly Maier, The Clackamas Print

As a result of advances in medicine and research, the human life expectancy has now increased to age 74 for males and 79 for females. By contrast, human mental decline starts at around the age of 40.

A healthy body is useless if driven by an ailing mind. Follow these tips to help your brain perform its best and fight off dementia in later life:



1. Take a deep breath - When you inhale deeply, the air in your lungs should expand the lower part of your ribcage. If you take a deep breath and your lungs expand the area near your breastbone, you're breathing wrong. The brain needs a constant supply of oxygen or its cells will die. Because you're born with all of the brain-cells you will ever have, breathing correctly is essential if you want to keep your brain functioning.

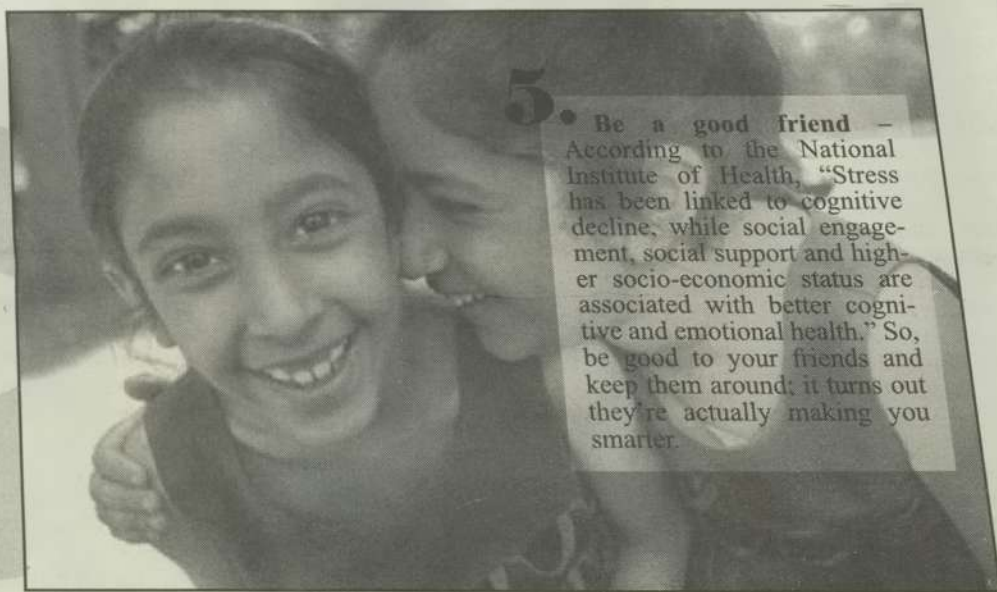
2. Sex it up - Brain imaging studies at UCLA have shown that people who experience more frequent orgasms have increased brain activity and superior memory. Getting excited during sex causes an increase of blood flow and oxygen to the brain.



3. Be a bookworm - Reading and writing are both activities that create connections between nerve cells in the brain. These connections protect the brain from dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

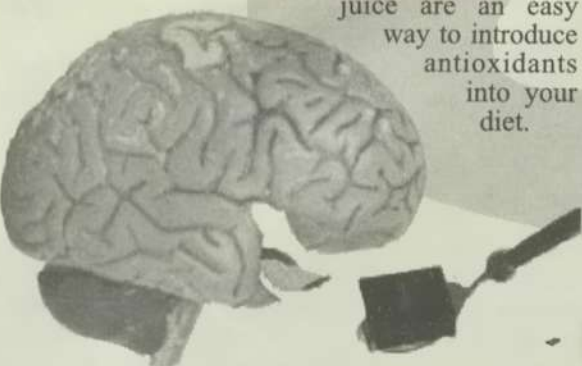


4. Keep your heart happy - Without a clear pathway for blood to enter the brain, it will be deprived of the oxygen it needs to survive. Smoking, eating fatty foods and being a greasy, fat ass in general will clog up your arteries, making a narrow path of great resistance for oxygenated blood.



5. Be a good friend - According to the National Institute of Health, "Stress has been linked to cognitive decline, while social engagement, social support and higher socio-economic status are associated with better cognitive and emotional health." So, be good to your friends and keep them around; it turns out they're actually making you smarter.

6. Feed your brain - Fruits, vegetables and grains are rich in antioxidants, which protect your brain from degenerating and help keep it disease-free. Antioxidants intercept free radicals and protect cells from oxidative damage that leads to aging and dementia-related diseases. Blueberries and apple juice are an easy way to introduce antioxidants into your diet.



7. Use it or lose it - Unused parts of the brain cease functioning just like any other part of the body. Challenging the thinker with uncharted activities wakes up new areas and enhances overall learning ability. Crossword puzzles and board games are a good way to stimulate your mind.

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8. Easy on the drugs and alcohol - This is a no-brainer. These substances cross the blood-brain barrier and cause severe damage.



9. Chill out - Stress is a major cause of high blood pressure, which limits blood flow to your melon. When a person is overstressed, it causes chemical imbalances that impair the transmission of nerve signals, slowing brain function.



10. Stay in school - The National Institute of Health determined that higher levels of education correlate with good cognitive function. It is speculated that education provides a "cognitive reserve" for the brain to rely on when tissue starts deteriorating. So, essentially, college is a back-up plan in more ways than one.

