

BRAIN BOOSTER BLOG BLURBS

aka: Mind Matters Map

By Susan Grandgeorge, FDN-P

Ok, so you want to reclaim your brain, or make the brain stay the same, or train your brain. We could start with a rhyming game! Ha. Actually, that idea is not lame. We now all know that “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” is a false statement. In fact, working to do just that.... keeps the neuroplasticity (flexibility of the brain) from atrophying. The brain is just another body part & like all the parts, it needs exercising. Like all the parts, it needs nutrients, sunlight & quality sleep. So herein lies the good news. Absolutely everything to be done to enhance brain function & prevent decline, also enhances function & prevents decline in the rest of the body. In this time of more & more discoveries in neuroscience, it becomes more & more evident that our daily habits & lifestyle choices significantly impact our brain health. These same good habits & lifestyle choices also impact all areas of health & functionality. More good news: it isn’t rocket science. Anyone can do it. It is simple.

Let’s picture a “Health House”, an “Optimal Wellness Abode”. It very much resembles a gazebo built with five pillars. All five are necessary to maintain the integrity of the structure. If a hurricane were to come & take out one of the pillars, the structure would most likely still stand, but its strength & resilience would be compromised. If more pillars are damaged or removed, more weakness ensues until the building destructs. Optimal wellness, which we should all be seeking, requires all five pillars all the time. An acronym by which to remember them is DRESS. The letters stand for Diet, Rest, Exercise, Stress Reduction, Supplementation. Over time, I will cover aspects of all the pillars. Know that everything covered will improve function overall, but I will feed the information through the “brain health” faucet. Also know that we all have a choice. We can opt into the wellness system now or be forced into the sickness system later. Again, it is “simple”. Note, I did not say “easy”.

I will begin with Exercise, summarized from “Top 10 Ways to Rewire Your Brain”, an eBook compiled by father/son combo: Dr. Austin Perlmutter (internal medicine MD) & Dr. David Perlmutter (neurologist). Studies listed show that regular exercise:

- leads to the growth of new brain cells called neurogenesis, particularly in the hippocampus, the area vital for memory & learning
- benefits the aging brain- lowers risk of cognitive decline & dementia, serving as health insurance for the brain
- boosts mood & cognitive abilities (even a single work-out) due to increased blood flow to the brain delivering oxygen & nutrients stimulating cognitive function.
- results in overall physical fitness which also enhances brain function & sense of well-being.

“Integrating regular exercise into your daily routine is a non-negotiable strategy for brain health”. What is “regular exercise”? More good news: it does not need to be strenuous. In fact, overly strenuous exercise can have a negative effect. (Note: don’t look to Lynda Fitzstephens’ exercise routine as a place to start.) Simply walking is HUGE. The goal is

150 minutes a week. That is five, 30-minute walks a week, or any break down of that you like. Of course, if there is a movement you love like dance, pickleball, tennis, biking, do that some or all of the days. The key is regularity, not complexity. Simple, right? No one can tackle all steps to optimal health at once, but small changes can be made over time. As the Nike ad used to say, "Just Do It".

So, what do you think? Ha. Or, how well do you think? Does your think stink? Can you think in a wink? Or do you need a shrink? Ok, that's it for today.... I've run out of rhyme..er..time.

For more on the Dr. Perlmutter-

- *Dr. David Perlmutter MD, Neurologist, Functional Medicine, Nutrition, Author, Lecturer.Drperlmutter.com; The Empowering Neurologist Podcast, Facebook David Perlmutter, M.D.; Instagram davidperlmutter.*

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