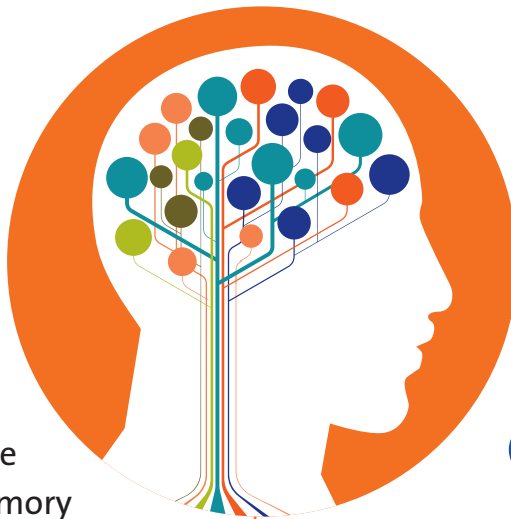


# 20 BRIEF BRAINY BITS

The following facts about brain health are all taken from research used in **Boost Your Brain & Memory**, the program developed by Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging.



## 1 Get a Move on!

Regular physical activity can prevent or delay signs of dementia. People who have a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's Disease may be helped the most by physical activity.

## 2 Oooohhmmmm....

Meditation increases gray matter in areas of the brain associated with short- and long-term memory and complex cognitive processes.

## 3 Go for the "Good Fats"!

Mono- and poly-unsaturated fats are good for your brain, because of their essential nutrients. Unlike saturated fats, they don't clog your arteries!

## 4 Seek the Spiritual.

In people with Alzheimer's Disease, those who practiced religion or spirituality are associated with slower rates of cognitive decline.

## 5 Walking the Walk.

Cardio exercise such as brisk walking has been linked to growth in the area of the brain associated with creating new memories.

## 6 1, 2, 3, Relax!

Stress is bad for the brain and the body. Learn to counter it by activating your relaxation state. For example, you can sit quietly and focus on slowing your breathing.

## 7 Time to Go Back to School!

Researchers believe that the most efficient way to build more connections between brain cells is to learn something new.

## 8 Eat Your Fruits & Veggies.

Antioxidants reduce chronic inflammation, which has been linked to Alzheimer's. They also relieve oxidative stress, which has been linked to a number of conditions and diseases including Alzheimer's.

## 9 To Err Is Human . . .

Forgiveness is good for the brain. Letting go of grudges and anger can reduce stress and depression, and increase feelings of well-being—all benefits to the brain!

## 10 Be a Social Butterfly.

Social engagement has been associated with preserving memory and thinking abilities. In one study of more than 1,000 older adults, the 10% with the highest level of social activity had 70% less cognitive decline than those in the lowest 10%.

## 11 No Negative Nellies!

You can help your brain and reduce stress by thinking compassionately about yourself; by reversing negative thinking (we all do it!), you'll form new pathways in your brain and weaken the old ones.

## 12 Work Your Body, Then Work Your Brain.

People perform better on tests of memory when they take them after periods of physical exertion.

## 13 Take It up a Notch!

You can also up the difficulty of a regular activity to make it more challenging—such as increasing the level of difficulty you choose for Sudoku or crossword puzzles.

## 14 Peaches over Pills.

Get your vitamins from food rather than pills or supplements; they are more effective that way.

## 15 Remember to Meditate!

Preliminary research indicates that mindfulness meditation may enhance working memory.

## 16 30 Minutes, 3X a Week.

A total of 90 minutes of brisk walking every week is all you need to improve cognitive outcomes and increase blood flow to the brain.

## 17 Grab a Cup of Joe!

Coffee has been shown to improve short-term memory. And one study found that three cups of coffee a day decreased risk of Alzheimer's by as much as 65%.

## 18 Try Tai Chi.

Tai chi may have brain benefits that other types of exercise do not, because it cognitively engages participants.

## 19 Making a Difference Makes a Difference.

A higher sense of purpose in life has been linked to reduced signs of dementia.

## 20 In It for the Long Haul.

Higher levels of exercise at higher intensities for longer amounts of time throughout your life appear to be the most beneficial.

For more information or to download the free Orange Paper *Investing in Brain Health Pays off*, visit [www.boostyourbrainandmemory.com](http://www.boostyourbrainandmemory.com).

 **matherlifeways®**  
**Institute on Aging**