



**LIVING STRONG**  
NORTH IDAHO

# Lifestyle Habits That Support Brain Health

Living Strong North Idaho Educational Resource

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Brain health becomes increasingly important as we age. Changes in memory, attention, and processing speed are common with aging, but lifestyle habits can strongly influence how the brain functions over time.

Research shows that healthy habits such as regular physical activity, good nutrition, quality sleep, mental stimulation, and social engagement help support brain health. These habits can help maintain memory, thinking ability, and overall cognitive function as we age.

## WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS



Multiple lifestyle habits together influence brain health and cognitive function



Physical activity supports blood flow to the brain and neural health



Healthy dietary patterns are associated with better long-term cognitive function



Quality sleep helps the brain recover, process memories, and regulate mood

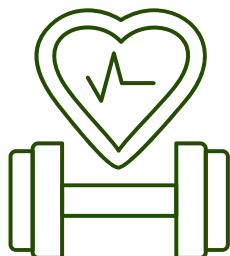


Social engagement and mental stimulation help maintain cognitive resilience

Research on brain health consistently shows that multiple lifestyle factors—exercise, diet, sleep, cognitive engagement, and social activity—work together to support cognitive function and reduce risk of decline.

Sources:

- Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention
- National Institute on Aging — Cognitive Health
- Harvard Health Publishing — Exercise and Brain Health








## KEY INSIGHT

Brain health is strongly influenced by daily lifestyle habits. Regular movement, nutritious foods, quality sleep, mental stimulation, and social engagement all work together to support cognitive function and long-term brain health.

## LIFESTYLE HABITS THAT SUPPORT BRAIN HEALTH

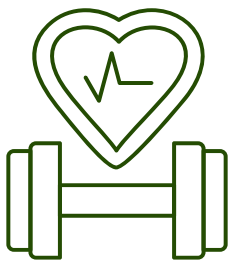
- ✓ Regular physical activity such as walking, strength training, or other exercise
- ✓ Quality sleep to support memory, learning, and brain recovery
- ✓ Healthy nutrition that includes fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and whole foods
- ✓ Mental stimulation such as reading, learning new skills, puzzles, or hobbies
- ✓ Social connection through friendships, family, community activities, or volunteering

## MENTAL EXERCISES THAT SUPPORT COGNITIVE HEALTH

-  Learning new skills such as a language, musical instrument, or hobby
-  Reading regularly to stimulate memory and comprehension
-  Puzzles and brain games such as crosswords, Sudoku, or strategy games
-  Creative activities like writing, drawing, or crafts
-  Participating in discussions or group learning activities

Sources:

- National Institute on Aging — Cognitive Health and Older Adults
- Duffner et al., 2022 — Cognitive and Social Leisure Activities and Dementia Risk
- Liu et al., 2024 — Cognitive Activities and Risk of Dementia



### KEY TAKEAWAY

Brain health is influenced by the habits we practice every day. Regular physical activity, nutritious foods, quality sleep, mental stimulation, and social engagement all work together to support cognitive function. Maintaining these habits throughout life can help support memory, thinking ability, and overall brain health as we age.

Living Strong North Idaho – A Program of the Inland Northwest Healthy Aging Alliance

Educational Disclaimer: The information provided in this resource is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice.

Individuals should consult with a qualified healthcare professional before beginning any exercise, nutrition, or health program.