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Improve Your Memory

We've all misplaced keys, forgotten a name, or blanked on why we went to the kitchen. Occasionally, forgetting the little things happens to all of us. Yet, memory loss is nothing to take lightly. As we age our brains naturally undergo physiological changes which affect our memory. While some factors, such as genes, are out of our control, the good news is you can help prevent memory loss by engaging in simple exercises!

Tips to Improve Memory

- **Engage in regular exercise.** Exercising can reduce the risk for disorders that cause memory loss by increasing the amount of oxygen to your brain. Try to incorporate 150 minutes of aerobic exercise into your routine each week. Not only will you feel better, but so will your brain!
- **Get enough sleep.** When you are sleep deprived, your brain doesn't function normally which can compromise everyday tasks. At the top of the list is memory. Research shows that sleep is essential for memory consolidation. In fact, memory-enhancing activity occurs during the deepest stages of sleep.
- **Stay mentally active.** Your brain has already developed millions of pathways that help you process information and solve familiar problems. If these pathways are continuously used, your brain isn't getting the stimulation it needs to grow. Developing new pathways can help improve memory. Breaking routines and trying new, challenging activities are the easiest ways to form new pathways. Try brushing your teeth with your less-dominant hand, taking a new route home from work, or completing a crossword puzzle.
- **Socialize regularly.** Research has shown people with active social lives have the slowest rates of memory decline. Social interaction wards off depression and stress, both of which contribute to memory loss. Getting together with family or friends is not only great for social interaction, but it also opens up a door for laughter. Laughing engages many regions of the brain and has many beneficial long term effects. After all, laughter is the best medicine!



Sources: www.helpguide.org

Body Image: Learning to Love What You See

Now that the weather has warmed up and summer is in full swing, the term "swimsuit season" is back on the radar. Maintaining a positive body image during the summer months can prove more difficult for some, and even hinder one's progress towards a goal. In order to stay focused, here are a few tips and reminders to foster your self-image, and enter the summer as confident as ever.

Body image is how we perceive our looks, and the feelings and reactions to our self-perceived attributes. A positive body image, one in which a person feels happy about his or her body and has mostly positive thoughts about his or her abilities and attributes, is always evolving. It can be influenced by many factors including family, peers, and the media. A positive body image contributes to psychological wellness, and can help decrease the incidence of depression, interpersonal anxiety, and eating disorders. Building a positive body image is a lifelong process, and can be jump-started with a few tips.



- **Make a list.** List the top ten things that you like about yourself--unrelated to how much you weigh or what you look like. Read this list often, and add to it whenever you would like!
- **Give positive affirmations.** Don't lose sight of your goals and how far you have come. Celebrate your accomplishments with positive affirmations, and keep your eyes on the next step.
- **Learn to laugh and smile.** Recognize that it is okay to treat your body and let it know that you appreciate it. Find time for things that you enjoy, or discover a peaceful place outside to relax.
- **Work with your body, not against it.** Everyone's bodies are different. Analyze your body's restrictions, and work with them to continue making forward progress towards your goals.
- **Affirm your self-image.** For every negative thought that you catch yourself with, follow it up with at least three positive thoughts.

For a look at a campaign aimed at improving self-image, check out the Dove Beauty Sketches Experiment.

Sources: my.clevelandclinic.org;
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org



The Gluten Fad: Harmful or Healthy?

The gluten free diet: we've seen it in magazines, heard about it on the news, and even followed TV icon Oprah Winfrey through a 21-day "cleanser" that temporarily eliminated gluten from her diet. The ever-fashionable fad has people wondering: "Should I eliminate gluten from my diet?"

Over the past few years, the gluten free diet has been attributed to weight loss, boosting health and energy, and potentially having a positive effect on conditions such as ADHD and chronic headaches. But this strict diet has been around long before it appeared in The New York Times. Gluten causes inflammation in the small intestine for people with Celiac's Disease and gluten sensitivity. Removing gluten from the diet has been a proven long-term treatment for alleviating signs and symptoms, preventing complications, and even repairing intestinal damage caused by the consumption of gluten.

Although eliminating gluten has serious health benefits for those suffering from Celiac's Disease or gluten sensitivity, it is not necessarily a healthier diet. There are many gluten free options that are considered to be "junk food" and should be limited or avoided. Also, gluten free items are less routinely fortified with Vitamins B and D, increasing the risk of deficiency. If you think that you might benefit from a gluten free diet, meet with your doctor or a Registered Dietician to discuss your plan.

There are many naturally gluten free foods that may already be in your diet. Try this red, white, and blue summer salad to satisfy everyone at your Fourth of July bash--even those eating gluten free!

Red White and Blue Sweet Summer Salad

- 3-4 cups fresh romaine
- 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
- 1/2 cup fresh strawberries, cut in pieces
- 1 oz crumbled feta
- 1 tbsp Sweet Poppyseed dressing

Top the greens with berries and cheese. Drizzle on the dressing just before serving, and enjoy!



Source: www.webmd.com; www.mayoclinic.com; www.greenlitebites.com

Hunger, Appetite & Satiety

Our eating patterns and behaviors are determined by complex connections between the mind and body. Although hunger, appetite, and satiety are all interconnected, many times these words are used interchangeably. However, there are differences between the three that determine what, when, and why we eat.

Need vs. Want

Hunger is the physiological need for food. The biggest cue that tells us we're hungry is an empty or growling stomach. Appetite is the psychological desire to eat. Sensory experiences such as sight and smell, emotional cues, and social situations can prompt appetite. We often associate hunger and appetite together, yet these two can occur separately. If you have ever felt stuffed from a dinner, but you still have room for dessert, you know the feeling. Many times our body is telling us we're full, but we still have the desire to eat. This can lead to overeating and diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension.

The Feeling of Fullness

To fully understand our eating patterns, we must be aware of satiety: the physiological and psychological experience of fullness after we eat or drink. How much we eat, along with the characteristics of the food, can determine how quickly and how long we feel satisfied.

• **Water:** Food containing high levels of water are known to promote fullness. This is because water adds volume to the content of food which pushes on the stomach walls. When your stomach is stretched, you feel full. Some foods with a high water content include fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk, and lean meats.

• **Fiber:** Like water, fiber adds volume to food, promoting fullness. Because of this, we don't need to eat as much food to feel full. Fiber also tends to make us feel full for a longer period of time. Whole grains, legumes, fruit, and vegetables are foods packed with fiber.

• **Macronutrients:** The three macronutrients that provide us with calories (energy) are carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. Fats provide us with the most energy, followed by carbohydrates and proteins. Research has shown fat tends to sit in our stomach longer, but doesn't make us feel as full. Compared to carbohydrates and proteins, fat doesn't take up as much room in our stomach. Therefore, our stomach isn't being stretched as much and we don't feel as full. As a result, we may eat more and feel satiated for a shorter period of time. Being aware of how much fat you consume can help with problems of overeating.



Source: www.uspotatoes.com