

5 Facts About Brain Health... And Brain Breakthroughs That Might Surprise You!

It's National Brain Awareness week! And it's hard to be aware without maintaining your brain – so it's a good time to give a little attention to the organ that most closely guarantees our mental health.

Perceptions on brain knowledge, mental health and neuroscience have all changed drastically in just the last 10 years – and we still don't know very much about the brain! Since popular belief views the brain as central to mental illness and/or disorders, it's very important to focus on neuroscience. Not just the technical details, but the mental health side as well.

For National Brain Awareness Week, we're providing you with tools to keep the brain healthy! Remember: good habits are key.

1. FEED your brain. Literally! The brain loves when you eat B-12s, antioxidants, and Omega 3s. Blackberries, blueberries, tomatoes, bananas, fish, flax seed... The list goes on. Check out this list from [BBC](#)
2. WORK your brain. Physical activity shows increased brain function – especially after yoga exercise! The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [compared the brain](#) after yoga versus after aerobic exercise and found significant increases in brain function.
3. REST your brain. Take a nap. 20-30 minutes can help brain function when you're tired or stressed.
4. Have a laugh! Cortisol and epinephrine are brain killers – and the number one chemicals produced during stress. The more you laugh, and the better humor you have, the more antibodies and endorphins you produce. These naturally prevent your body from feeling pain!
5. SHARE your brain! Participating with others and socializing is proven to be good for overall mental health. Stay connected!

To wrap up the celebration of brains and mental health, here are some of the most recent neuroscience breakthroughs, from [National Journal](#):

- A new technology called CLARITY was developed by Stanford in 2013. CLARITY shows scientists the fully intact brain, in all its complexities, in full 3D. This eliminates the need to cut up a brain to get a look at it!
- In studying mice, scientists discovered that the brain “cleans” itself more efficiently during sleep. How? Channels between neurons expand to allow more cerebrospinal fluid to flow.
- Researchers succeeded in growing brain “organoids” in vitro, great for studying disease!

Happy Brain Awareness Week! Stay healthy and [stay protected in your mental health or allied health practice!](#)

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