



It's officially summer! It's warm, the sun is shining, kids are tossing out their text books and everyone is ready to just relax. Isn't that a great feeling? Taking time to not have to think about anything? Of course, mental breaks are nice and actually healthy for you. Some people read books, some go for full-body massages, others may go for a nice bike ride (bicycles or Harleys – your choice), and some do nothing at all. But don't get too

comfortable! Helen Hayes said it best. Simply put, "If you rest, you rust." Or if you want to get fancy with it, "Just as iron rusts from disuse... even so does inaction spoil the intellect." said the great Leonardo da Vinci. That one should really get you thinking – and that's the point!

June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month. According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's is a fatal disease of the brain, a type of dementia in older individuals that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. In short, it occurs when neurons in the brain fail to continue to communicate with each other, due to a chemical toxicity in the brain. Fortunately, there are preventative actions we can take to reduce our risk for development of Alzheimer's.¹

Research suggests Alzheimer's disease starts at least 10 years before one begins to show symptoms! In fact, a study conducted by Dr. Laurent Younes, Ph.D., has shown that high levels of the tau protein, a biomarker of Alzheimer's, has been detected as early as 34 years before symptom onset!² So, what can we do to prevent it?

Using all five of your senses may help strengthen your brain.³ A couple of ways you can use all of your five senses is to visit a farmers market, go to a restaurant, or attend a food truck festival. These activities cover all marks - from seeing all of the vibrant colors of foods, hearing the crowds, smelling the aromas, touching what you're about to eat, and of course tasting!

"There is increasing evidence connecting cardiovascular risk factors with brain health," says Johns Hopkins cardiologist Seth Martin, M.D., M.H.S.⁴ The brain has one of the richest blood supplies of any organ and consumes up to 20 percent of the energy used by the human body—more than any other organ.⁵

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Therefore, aerobic exercise to sustain vascular health may also greatly reduce your risk of Alzheimer's. Exercise training may delay the decline in cognitive function that occurs in individuals who are at risk of or have AD.⁶

Just like exercising your muscles and your heart, your brain needs a good workout, too! Here are a few ways to keep your brain engaged: **read, manage your stress, build a piece of furniture, complete a puzzle, paint, sing, volunteer, make friends, increase your physical activity - don't become sedentary, partake in lots of social engagement, build your vocabulary, dance, and keep learning.** A wise woman approaching her 90th year, who was also still very active in the workforce, once told me how she kept up. She said, "Just keep moving!"

At Tycor, we are encouraging our employees to maintain healthy brains! Join us: Our monthly challenge is to start learning and using unfamiliar words to keep our brains active. Start a list of unfamiliar words and begin using them in your daily speech. If you can use them multiple times — ideally FIVE times throughout the day — that's even better. Remember, "If you rest, you rust." Let's keep our brains sharp, together!

Sources

¹ n.d. <<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-alzheimers>>.

² Medical News Today. n.d. <<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325235#Tau-levels-change-34-years-before-symptoms>>.

³ HealthLine. n.d. <<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/brain-exercises#use-your-senses>>.

⁴ Seth Shay Martin, M.D., M.H.S. John Hopkins Medicine. n.d. <<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/dementia/dementia-and-heart-health-are-they-related>>.

⁵ National Institute on Aging. n.d. <<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-happens-brain-alzheimers-disease>>.

⁶ Medical News Today Newsletter. n.d. <<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320770>>.