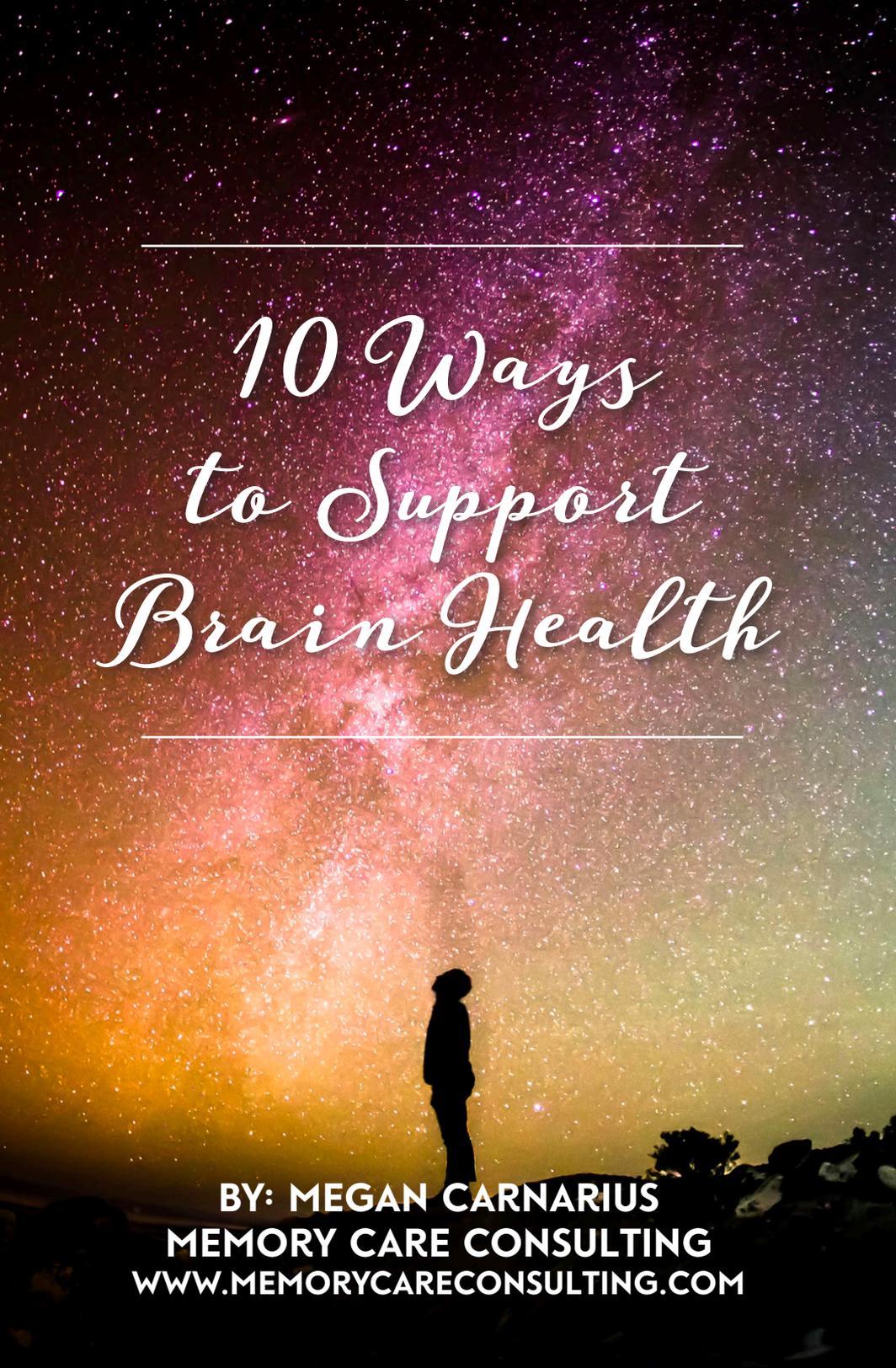

*10 Ways
to Support
Brain Health*



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Tip #1

EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN

YOUR BRAIN HAS THE ABILITY TO DEVELOP NEW NEURAL PATHWAYS - THIS IS CALLED BRAIN PLASTICITY.

Brain plasticity is increased by trying new things, for example, square dancing, learning a language, or trying a new skill such as pottery or carpentry. By using your imagination and creativity, through reading writing, thinking and solving spatial problems, your brain gets stronger because it is being given a workout.

Exposing yourself to new opportunities that involve educating yourself about things you have not previously considered or done provides the cognitive workout your brain thrives on.

Tip #2

PHYSICAL EXERCISES BENEFIT YOUR BRAIN

RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE IDEA THAT INCREASING YOUR BLOOD FLOW AND CIRCULATION IMPROVES YOUR BRAIN HEALTH.

It is incredibly beneficial if you can consistently do 20 to 40 minutes of cardio activity two to three times a week (such as fast walking, jogging, hiking, biking, swimming, cross-country skiing, or high paced dancing) to increase your heart rate and blood flow. Additionally, doing high-intensity strength training two to three times a week is strongly recommended. In studies working with mild cognitive impairment, physical exercise was an important component in keeping cognitive abilities remaining at the same functional level over a longer period of time. Those individuals who maintain a higher activity level tend to suffer from less depression, fewer falls and other health concerns while maintaining balance and muscle strength. What helps the body also helps the mind.



Tip #3

OPTIMISTS LIVE LONGER!

THE LONG-TERM STUDIES ON AGING AND HEALTH HAVE BROUGHT SOME INTERESTING POINTS TO LIGHT.

One of them is if a person is more positive and optimistic they are more resilient and they live longer. Optimistic people actually live on average 7.5 years longer than their pessimistic counterparts. Express gratitude, positive opinions and comments. Look for the good in situations. Stay away from criticizing when it's not asked for or required. Our hearts connect to our brains, and our brains to our hearts. If we can pursue ways to heal ourselves when life really challenges us, and allow ourselves to let go of bitterness we can create a life worth living, and therefore worth living longer.



Tip #4

STRESS MANAGEMENT LEADS TO LONGEVITY

OVER TIME, STRESS DIMINISHES OUR BODIES' ABILITY TO FUNCTION.

Momentary stress is part of life and passes quickly; it's something that we often "mobilize in a moment" like lifting weights, recovery from an injury, interviewing for a promotion, taking a difficult exam, or catching a child about to fall. Long-term stress may affect our daily life in ways that we feel we can't control or get a break from - that needs our attention. Long-term stress affects mood, often increasing depression and can impair memory. Finding strategies that help you manage stress allows your body, heart, and mind to restore itself to its optimal balance. There are many verifying studies about stress management.

Sometimes people feel overwhelmed by all the options, however, recommendations such as one hour of yoga a week or 12 minutes of daily meditation have shown to improve memory. Making small steps toward managing your stress also impacts your longevity. A common trait for individuals living over 100 years is their ability to handle stress.

A woman is lying down with her eyes closed, her hands raised and holding a large, bright red heart. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color. The overall mood is peaceful and focused on heart health.

Tip #5

HEART HEALTH SUPPORTS BRAIN HEALTH

A PHRASE WE HEAR IN THE COGNITIVE HEALTH WORLD IS “ANYTHING GOOD FOR YOUR HEART IS GOOD FOR YOUR BRAIN”.

Getting your blood pumping, improving your circulation, and addressing heart disease issues are directly linked to brain health. Eating the right foods that are good for your heart also nourish your brain. Supporting your “heart-felt” mood and feelings helps your brain. Isolation and/or depression are not good for the heart. For some interesting information on the brain-heart connection please check this website www.heartmathinstitute.com. Studies show that by having a social network - even a small but meaningful one - helps to ward off cognitive decline. Marriages influence longevity. Animal companions also help with their warmth, loyalty and unconditional love. It is good for us to care for others and for others to care for us. It is important to our heart health as well as our cognitive forces.

Tip #6

FEED YOUR BRAIN FABULOUS FOODS

NOURISHING FOODS FUEL ALL OF OUR BODY PROCESSES, INCLUDING OUR COGNITION.

The current recommendations provide roadmaps to optimal brain function. Make the emphasis heavier on fruits and vegetables. Fruits and leafy greens each 6 times a week and other colorful vegetables two times a day, including crucifers (broccoli, cauliflower). Beans and grains three servings each a week. Nuts five servings per week and berries (especially blueberries) two times a week. Use olive oil and coconut oil for your main oils and have some nut oils as well. There is less emphasis on animal protein, but fish such as salmon is recommended one time a week, and poultry two times a week. Look for Omega 3 and B12 sources. For those of you who like chocolate (pick dark chocolate) wine and coffee, the research is still supporting a serving a day of each. There is research that supports eating good foods but about 20% less calorie consumption can contribute over time to our bodies functioning more efficiently and to our longevity. Our brain needs good fuel from early childhood brain development all the way through life into our aging. Support your brain health with a variety of nourishing foods.

Tip #7

NATURE AND BRAIN HEALTH

OUR EXISTENCE OVER TIME WAS INTERWOVEN WITH NATURE.

As our cultures developed, this slowly shifted and, in many ways, Western society has become disconnected from nature. Individuals have to be more intentional about getting out into nature, being outdoors and spending quiet time with the elements of nature. Walks, hiking and time along streams, lakes and oceans brings us refreshment. Find ways to spend time outdoors - garden, walk animals, play with children, sit in the woods or near a meadow. We need silence; our brain needs breaks from all the commotion and noise of the "modern world". There are physicians who are writing prescriptions to "forest bathe", to get outside five days a week for an hour. Nature is part of us, it sustains us and we need to support efforts which keep natural open spaces close to us and the truly wild places wild. Our brains benefit by experiencing fresh air, sunlight and nature on regular intervals.

Tip #8

KEEP MOVING FOR BRAIN HEALTH



HUMAN BODIES ARE MEANT TO MOVE.

Studies show that moving helps in many ways: It burns calories, it creates breaks in stimulus or the lack of stimulus, it keeps us strong and our muscles functioning better and it helps our cognition. Folks sitting at desks are encouraged to stretch, look away or get up from what they are doing at least hourly (some recommend every 20 minutes) Standing desks are a new helpful solution. Putting reminders on your phones or fit-technology to get up and move more frequently can support new healthful habits. Take up tai-chi or some other gentle movement program. This has also been known to help lift some forms of depression. Getting enough movement during waking hours promotes more restful sleep. Getting a good night's sleep is important for brain health. As we sleep the brain is able to move out the used by-products of all our thoughts and activities in our waking hours. If we do not sleep deeply enough or have disturbed sleep this is actually a risk factor for dementia. Move and create true fatigue to allow for more restful clearer awakening.

Tip #9

BRAIN HEALTH THRIVES ON CREATIVITY

BEING CREATIVE AND USING OUR IMAGINATION HELPS OUR BRAIN.

As we think about things, our brain is using neural pathways. But when we think about or learn new things, it creates new neural pathways. Spending time doing mentally stimulating activity is important. Turn the computer off and turn the phone off, then think about a bucket list of hobbies, activities, travel, vacations, business ideas, etc.

What else you have been longing to put your energy toward? Find small ways and big ways to nurture that creative part of yourself. Your brain will thank you.

Tip #10

OUR BRAINS NEED LOVE AND CONNECTION

OUR LIVES NEED OTHERS IN THEM. TAKE TIME TO BE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS YOU CARE ABOUT.

At the end of the day, relationships often top the list of what is really important. Yet we find ourselves pulled by many demands on our schedule. Supportive people are the ones you love and who care about you. That warmth extends back to you and strengthens your heart and your brain. According to one study, isolation has the same impact on overall health as smoking almost a whole pack of cigarettes a day.

Be likable, and reach out and create community. View aging in positive ways. Stay optimistic. Participate in activities with other of similar values, such as faith communities, or hobby groups etc. Find your peeps, spend time with them - your heart and brain with resonate in the warmth of it.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MEGAN AT
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