

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK 13-19 MARCH

Just as physical health improves wellbeing, being brain fit helps you learn effectively, remember more and maintain clear thinking when under pressure. Your lifestyle impacts your brain but there are things you can do to retain your intellect across the lifespan.



Exercise and challenge your brain:

- Human mental decline typically begins before 40
- Unused parts of the brain stop working
- Challenging the brain with new activities wakes up new areas
- Research suggests ongoing mental stimulation provides some protection against mental decline

Nourish your brain with a healthy diet

- Like any high-performance machine, the brain needs top-quality fuel
- Protein and unsaturated fat is especially important for developing brains – your body converts amino acids in the protein you eat to specific proteins needed by the brain
- Research suggests anti-oxidant vitamins E and C protect the brain
- Glucose provides the energy to enable brain to build cells, produce chemicals for nerves to communicate and repair damage

Enjoy physical activity

- Regular exercise reduces depression and reduces cardiovascular risk factors – even a simple walk lets you think freely
- Exercise in the evening after a stressful day rather than early in the day
- Even 12 minutes at 85% maximum heart rate releases serotonin, dopamine and noradrenaline (like taking Prozac!)

Make “safety first” a priority

- Major causes of adult head trauma are motor vehicle accidents, on-the-job accidents, falls, assaults and sports injuries
- Take safety precautions including wearing seatbelts and sports safety helmets

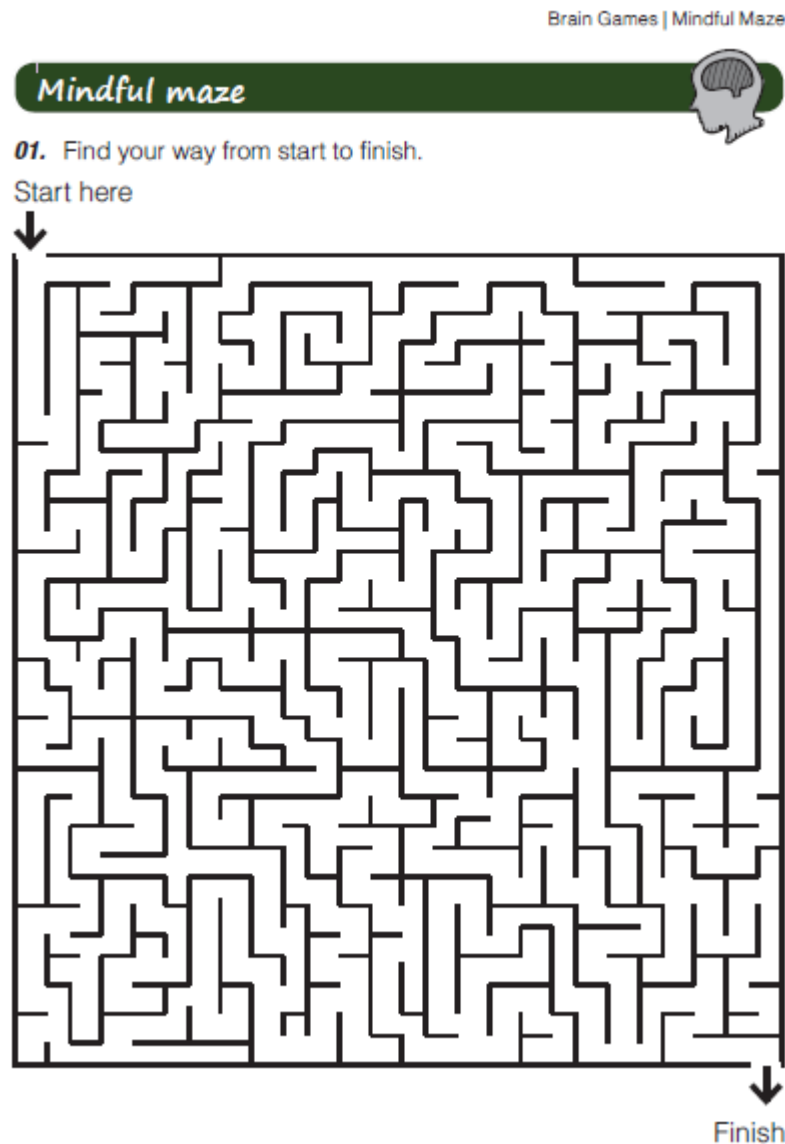
Learn to manage anxiety, stress and depression

- Anxiety increases heart rate and blood pressure and can lead to stroke
- There is increasing evidence that stress actually damages the brain due to hormones that increase during times of stress
- One of the toughest stresses is depression, which affects memory and slows brain metabolism

Relax and sleep well

- During sleep the brain repairs itself and boosts the immune system
- During rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the brain consolidates information learned during the day
- Seek help for sleep apnoea as it increases the risk of stroke.

Now have a go at this mindfulness maze!



The only constant about your brain is that it's always changing – even after it reaches maturity. So a change in brain function is to be expected as you age but if you are concerned about yourself or a loved one, make an appointment to see your doctor today.

<https://brainhealth.nia.nih.gov/>

<http://brainfoundation.org.au/healthy-brain>