

Brain Power

Keeping your
mind clear and
your memory sharp



Do you suffer from forgetfulness, lack of mental clarity and focus, cloudy thinking, mental confusion, or lack of confidence in your learning ability? If so, you're not alone.

If you look around you'll find that a large percentage of people have a hard time thinking clearly and accurately. They experience what we sometimes call cloudy thinking or brain fog. They may be unable to stay focused at work, are easily distracted, and have short attention spans.

This is not a problem we should ignore. It's a sign that something is wrong. Either the brain isn't getting the nutrients it needs, it's being damaged by toxins, or it's not being properly exercised. It may also be an indication that brain tissue is irritated and inflamed and if this isn't corrected, it can develop into severe problems later in life, such as dementia, Alzheimer's, and other neurological problems.

So, if you're suffering from confusion, distraction, lack of focus, poor concentration, memory problems, or cloudy thinking, it's time to start taking care of your brain health. And this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* will help teach you how.



Developing Brain Power

We'll start by dispelling some myths about healthy brain function. It's commonly thought that the reason some people are smart, and other people aren't, is primarily genetic. While it's true that genetics play a role in intelligence, mental power is primarily based on other factors.

Consider how brain power is similar to muscle power. It doesn't matter how good your genetic inheritance is, your muscles won't develop if you don't exercise them. No one develops physical strength and ability from genetics alone. They need to provide their bodies with protein and other nutrients necessary to build muscles and then they need to challenge those muscles with physical activity to increase strength and performance.

The same holds true for your brain. Your brain needs proper nutrition and you can't think clearly if you aren't getting it. Nor can you develop your mental powers if you don't study and practice to develop new knowledge and skills. Plus, you need to recognize that brain tissue is affected by various toxins such as solvents and heavy metals, which can cloud your thinking by creating inflammation in brain tissue.

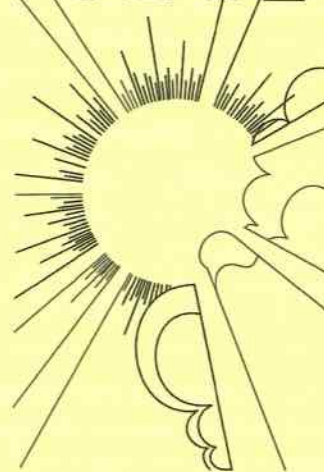
So, if you want to improve your brain power you need to do three things. First, you need to avoid chemicals that damage and irritate your brain. Second, you need to make sure that your brain is getting the nutrients it needs, including essential fatty acids, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and the antioxidants that protect your brain from inflammation. Finally, you need to properly exercise your brain by being a life long learner, always learning and trying new things.

Protecting Your Brain

Fog obscures vision and clouds block sunlight, so when we speak of brain fog or cloudy thinking, we're basically saying that something is obstructing the ability to think and perceive things clearly and accurately. When your mind is cloudy, it is likely that there is some sort of chemical interference with normal brain processes. A perfect example of this is the impact of alcohol (ethanol) on your brain. When levels of alcohol in the blood rise to a certain level, brain function becomes impaired, demonstrating alcohol's ability to impede normal brain activity.

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SUNSHINE SHARING



Your guide to better health the natural way

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Important Notice

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Alcohol isn't the only substance that interferes with normal brain activity. Legal and illegal drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and opioids do the same thing. It's also well documented that heavy metals like mercury, arsenic, and lead block normal brain function.



Collectively, chemicals that cause foggy or cloudy thinking are called neurotoxins and, in addition to the above mentioned substances, include many common environmental pollutants such as tetrachloroethylene (PERC), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), toluene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and organophosphate pesticides.

Dr. Daniel Amen has used brain scans to show that various chemicals will damage and deactivate various parts of the brain. As a result he recommends you do a cleanse of your life to protect your brain. This includes throwing away toxin-laden household cleaning products and personal care products and avoiding foods containing artificial chemicals such as preservatives and food colorings. He also recommends limiting your intake of alcohol and avoiding marijuana and other drugs.

Cleansing Your Brain

It isn't feasible to avoid all substances that can inhibit brain function, which is why cleansing your brain of chemicals is important to brain health. This is done by removing toxins from the cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column. This fluid is cleansed by the recently discovered glymphatic system. In simplest terms, here's how it works.

First, cerebrospinal fluid fills up special channels that are part of the glymphatic system. Toxins and metabolic waste are taken to various drainage sites where the fluid is moved into the lymphatic system, which cleans up the waste material and returns the fluid to the bloodstream.

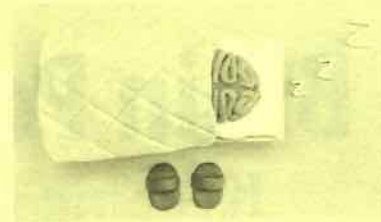
A critical discovery about this glymphatic system is that it works during deep sleep. So, if you don't get adequate sleep, the glymphatic system cannot perform its functions. This allows toxins to build up in the cerebrospinal fluid which will interfere with normal brain function. This is why a lack of sleep causes problems with cognitive abilities, judgement, and mood. It also helps explain why adequate sleep improves memory and reduces mental fatigue.

Getting the Sleep Your Brain Needs

Most experts suggest that a minimum of seven hours of sleep is needed in order for these brain-cleaning functions to occur. So, if you're not getting 7-8 hours of good sleep every night, here are some tips to improving the quantity and quality of your sleep.

Try to have a regular sleep schedule by going to bed between 10 and 12 in the evening. Stop watching TV or using computers and cell phones about one hour prior to bedtime. Do things that help you relax during this period of time. Read an uplifting book, listen to calming music, meditate, or do some gentle stretching.

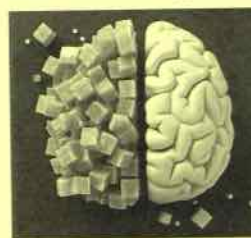
Darken your room or wear a sleep mask, as darkness helps your brain produce melatonin, which helps put you to sleep.



To help establish a healthy sleep cycle you can use herbs and supplements. If you're tense or nervous prior to bedtime, an *Herbal Sleep Aid Formula* with ingredients like hops, valerian, passionflower, skullcap, and/or kava kava, may help. You can also try a *Sleep Support Formula* which contains some of these herbs combined with ingredients like melatonin, GABA, 5-HTP, L-theanine, magnesium, and/or CBD.

Blood Sugar and the Brain

The brain takes up sugar without insulin, so the amount of sugar in the blood determines the amount of sugar the brain is getting. Too much sugar in the bloodstream overstimulates the brain. If there is too little sugar in the blood (hypoglycemia), then memory, concentration, and focus are impaired. When a person consumes excessive amounts of sugar, it will spike in their blood sugar, causing them to become agitated, excitable, restless, nervous, irritable, and hyperactive.



High levels of sugar will also increase inflammatory responses and there is evidence that inflammation in the brain contributes to many neurological disorders including depression, anxiety disorders, memory loss, and neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

So keeping blood sugar under control is another important way to protect your brain.

If your fasting blood sugar is higher than 100 or your A1C reading is above 5.7%, you should get your blood sugar under control. Cut refined carbohydrates (e.g. refined sugars, white flour, and white rice) out of your diet and eat more complex carbohydrates (e.g. fresh fruits and vegetables). Also, take a *Blood Sugar Control Formula* containing herbs like cinnamon, nopal, gymnema, bitter melon, and fenugreek.

Blood sugar can swing rapidly up and down in some people. Symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) include sudden fatigue and shakiness, mental confusion, difficulty concentrating, and lethargy or irritability. A sudden cold nose or cold fingers coupled with a craving for sweet foods or simple carbohydrates, is another sign.

You can reduce sugar cravings and level out these swings in blood sugar by taking two capsules of an *Algae Blend* (containing spirulina, blue-green algae, and chlorella) along with two capsules of licorice root at breakfast and again at lunch. If you experience a mid-afternoon slump take another dose around three or four in the after-noon. If you have high blood pressure take one capsule of bee pollen and one capsule of eleuthero root instead of the two capsules of licorice root.

Nootropics

The term nootropic refers to any substance that may enhance cognitive function, such as attention or memory. The term was coined by the Romanian psychologist and chemist, Corneliu E. Giurgea. He suggested that the term be applied to agents that enhanced learning or memory with low toxicity, few side effects, and without the effects of psychotropic drugs. He also suggested they should help protect the brain against physical and chemical injury. With that definition in mind, let's look at some of the nutrients, herbs, and phytochemicals which may have nootropic effects.



Bacopa

Bacopa is an ancient herb used in Ayurvedic medicine to enhance brain function. It is antioxidant and helps modulate immune responses in autoimmune conditions. Research suggests it can aid cognitive activity, including both memory and focus. It also helps reduce anxiety and depression. It needs to be taken for several months for maximum benefit.

Caffeine

Caffeine works by blocking adenosine receptors in your brain, making you feel less tired, but this can also increase your mental alertness. It is especially helpful if you're tired. However, a moderate dose (40-300 mg) works best. Higher doses can lead to anxiety.



Coffee, kola nuts, and guarana are stimulating caffeinated plants and are more likely to cause agitation or anxiety. Yerba maté and green tea are less stimulating and better for aiding cognitive function.

Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids

The brain contains a great deal of fat, with omega-3 essential fatty acids (EFAs) like EPA and DHA being the predominate fats in the brain. The vegetable oils that predominate in the American diet are high in omega-6 EFAs and low in omega-3 EFAs. Supplementing with omega-3 EFAs and especially DHA has helped some people with their cognitive function and mood. It also reduces inflammation, which helps protect the brain.

Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo supports circulation throughout the body and particularly in the brain. It has been shown to enhance mental activity in the elderly, improving problems like dementia, depression, mental decline and disorientation. It tones and strengthens veins and arteries, improving oxygen flow to the brain. It also helps protect the brain from free radical damage. Research in Europe has shown that ginkgo has the ability to enhance mental function, and has proven helpful with difficulty in concentration, absent-mindedness, loss of memory, confusion and dizziness.

Gotu Kola

Widely used in Indian medicine as a nerve tonic in the treatment of mental and nervous ailments such as epilepsy, schizophrenia and memory loss, gotu kola also contains theobromine, which is presumed to help increase oxygen to the brain, thereby promoting greater mental capacity and vitality. Have you heard the saying, "An elephant never forgets?" Well, folk tradition suggests that it's because elephants like gotu kola.



Korean Ginseng

Panax ginseng may also help to reduce brain fatigue and improve performance on difficult mental tasks. It's unclear how it works but it does help reduce stress and has anti-inflammatory effects.

L-Theanine

L-theanine is a naturally occurring amino acid found in tea. It's one of the reasons tea is less agitating as a caffeine source than coffee or kola beverages. Studies have found that L-theanine has a calming effect and that it can increase alpha waves in the brain, which are linked with creativity. It works well with the caffeine to enhance cognitive function and mental focus.

Magnesium L-Threonate

Magnesium relaxes muscle spasms and aids the production of calming neurotransmitters. It is also involved in the formation of new neural pathways, which means it can also help improve the ability to learn new things. This special form of magnesium more readily crosses the blood-brain barrier to increase levels of magnesium in the brain and has been shown to aid memory and learning.

Rhodiola Rosea

Rhodiola is an adaptogenic herb that helps your body handle stress more effectively. It can help the body more effectively resist both physical and mental/emotional stressors. It has been shown to reduce mental fatigue and decrease the feelings of burnout associated with chronic stress and anxiety.

Rosemary

Rosemary has long been used to protect the brain and memory as a person ages. It enhances cognitive function and is one of the strongest herbal antioxidants, having an ORAC value of 165,280, which is similar to that of bacopa, also used to protect the brain and memory. Part of the reason rosemary may help improve memory is because it stimulates circulation to the brain and head. The essential oil found in rosemary also stimulates the brain.



THERE'S ROSEMARY THAT'S FOR REMEMBRANCE

Sage

Like rosemary, sage has a reputation for enhancing mental function, especially as a person ages. It has a protective effect on the brain and is also associated with wisdom and good judgement which is why wise people are sometimes called sages.

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Formulas for Brain Health

Here are some formulas that may be helpful in improving concentration and memory, aiding the ability to learn, and reducing stress, anxiety, and other mood disorders.

Ashwagandha Complex

The primary herb in this formula is ashwagandha, which is nourishing adaptogen that can aid sleep and help to reduce stress. Both bacopa and rhodiola provide this blend with its nootropic effects. It also contains schisandra, another adaptogenic herb. This formula can help reduce stress levels while improving mental alertness and cognitive performance.

Watkin's Hair, Skin, and Nails Formula

This formula is typically used to support structural tissues like hair, fingernails, bones, and joints because of the silica it contains, but silica is also helpful for brain function. It is a component of the myelin sheath that insulates and protects neurons. In addition, this formula contains rosemary and sage, both of which help protect the brain and have a reputation for improving memory.

Memory Enhancing Formula

This formula contains three widely recognized nootropic herbs, ginkgo, gotu kola, and bacopa. Many people have found these herbs helpful in retaining memory and cognitive functions especially as they age. The formula may also help mental focus when studying and learning new things.

Nootropic Formula

This formula contains yerba maté leaf extract and rhodiola to increase mental alertness, mood, and energy levels. It also contains ginkgo and gotu kola, along with choline bitartrate, l-tyrosine, and l-aurine, vitamin C and other nutrients to provide a sustained boost in mental clarity, alertness, and mood. In clinical trials with this formula people taking it not only noticed increased energy and alertness, they also noticed an improvement in mood.

Exercising Your Brain



Your brain, like your muscles, need to be exercised. It is easy to fall into both behavioral and mental habits. But, the kinds of routines most people fall into as they age don't keep their brains challenged. As a result, they lose mental flexibility and experience a decline in their cognitive abilities.

Passively consuming media whether it be watching TV, playing mindless games, or endlessly scrolling on your phone can actually reduce your attention span. Being a passive observer doesn't help to improve your brain power. You need to be actively engaged in activities that help to form new neural connections in your brain.

It helps to be a life-long learner. Regularly try to master a new field of study. You can also solve puzzles or play mental games to improve your cognitive abilities. Staying socially active and participating in interesting and thoughtful conversations with other people is also good for developing your mental powers.

And, part of training your brain is using your body. Learning a new sport or instrument, or starting a new hobby will do a lot for keeping your brain active. Exercises that require mindfulness and mental focus are also helpful, such as yoga or tai chi.

Additional Help and Information

For more information about nootropics and enhancing your brain power contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

Strategies for Health by Steven Horne

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/nootropics>

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins-and-supplements/features/nootropics-smart-drugs-overview>