

"NO -COST" SUGGESTIONS

Being short on cash should not keep you from making healthy changes to keep your brain sharp. Here's a list of a few things you can do in each of the key areas of brain health - and they don't cost you a thing. So you can start today!



NUTRITION

Add an intermittent fasting schedule to your lifestyle. You have several options, but my favorite is the 16:8 . That means you fast for 16 hours and then having eight hours to eat whatever you want. Of course, the healthier foods you select, the better! What I like best about this option is that 1) you can choose your own hours and 2) you're sleep for half of your fasting hours!

For example, here's my fasting schedule:

- Wake up: 6 am
- No food: 6 am - 10 am (4 -hr. fast)
- Eat food: 10 am - 6 pm (8 hrs)
- No food: 6 pm - 10 pm (4-hr. fast)
- Sleep:10 pm - 6 am (8-hr. fast)

If a 16-hour fast seems too long, no worries!

You can whittle it down to 14 or 12 and still get great benefits. Just change the 4-hr. intervals to

3 or 2-hr intervals. Adjust your wake and sleep times to what suits you and then go for it!



EXERCISE

You already know that you don't need money to exercise. Put if you can't seem to make a schedule you'll stick to, at least get up and move every hour or so. Experts say that "being active is the single most important strategy you can employ to prevent and remediate cognitive decline." (Dale E. Bredesen, MD).So if you're not even up to taking a brisk walk, make sure that you're up every hour or so doing something, even a house chore like emptying the trash, washing dishes, sweeping, polishing, folding clothes, etc. Instead of blocking out a 2-hour span of time for to clean house or do yard work, scatter it throughout your day, so you're not sitting for hours on end.



ENGAGEMENT

Make up your mind to do something new, enjoyable, intriguing, or rewarding every day. Activities that engage your mind to plan, discover, problem-solve, clarify, or learn stimulates new cells and connections. You might try getting a hobby, volunteering, teaching, tutoring, or taking a class of some sort. Having lengthy, pleasurable conversations is also a brain enhancer.



DESTRESS

Make deep breathing (aka belly breathing or diaphragmatic breathing) a regular part of your life. It is one of the easiest ways to ward off stress and anxiety, reduce pain and high blood pressure, and even help with digestion. It should be slow and gentle, focusing on breathing from your abdomen, not from your chest. Find ways to sneak it into your routine, like when you wake up, while taking a bath or shower, driving or riding your car, sitting in front of a screen, etc. It may help to even put a reminder on your phone or computer screen.



SLEEP

Your lighting should coax you into a relaxed state, preparing your body for a good night's sleep. Soften night lights with 40-watt bulbs, dimmer switches, or salt lamps. Blue light interferes with proper melatonin production, so train yourself to turn off screens (computer, tv, cell phone, etc.) 1-2 hours before you actually get into the bed. Those last 2 hours are a great time to have family conversations or board game time, meditate, listen to music, read, finish chores - anything that doesn't require a screen. Creating this habit is well worth the effort. It will get your body "in the mood", producing quality sleep that allows your brain to do its job more efficiently.

