



GOOD BRAIN HEALTH MATTERS: HOW TO LIVE A LONG & HEALTHY LIFE

TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY AGEING



TIP ONE: EAT A BALANCED AND HEALTHY DIET

Research shows that a Mediterranean diet has a protective effect on brain health and is associated with a decreased rate of cognitive decline. This diet is high in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, beans, cereals, grains, fish, and unsaturated fats.

EVIDENCE

TILDA Participants who eat fruit and veg twice a day or more, and who eat high fibre bread once a day, are better able to maintain good cognitive function as they age.



TIP TWO: LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Exercise regularly, eat healthy, be social. Practice these self-care activities to keep mentally healthy and learn how to minimise and manage worries or anxiety.

EVIDENCE

TILDA Participants who report low levels of stress have better memory than those who report high levels of stress. Those with lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol have better cognitive function and memory.



TIP THREE: EXERCISE OFTEN AND REGULARLY

Regular exercise benefits the brain and is a known modifiable risk factor for dementia. Make sure to limit time spent sitting, and do 150 minutes of moderate - intensity aerobic exercise weekly.

EVIDENCE

85% of TILDA Participants who exercise for at least 20 minutes daily report having excellent or good self-rated health. Exercise also helps to improve mental health and cognitive function such as memory and attention.



TIP FOUR: GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Try to get 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Good sleep helps to improve overall health and may help to reduce cognitive decline as a person ages.

EVIDENCE

TILDA participants who sleep within the above range have better cognitive function compared to those who sleep less or more.

For more information please visit www.tilda.ie

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TIP FIVE: KEEP A STRONG SOCIAL NETWORK

Social interaction can have profound effects on health and longevity. Those with strong social ties are less likely to experience cognitive decline than those who do not have a strong social network.

EVIDENCE

91% of TILDA Participants who have a large network of family and friends report having excellent or good health; 80% show no or very mild depressive symptoms.



TIP SEVEN: CHECK HEALTH

Going for regular health check-ups can help us to stay physically and cognitively healthy. Keeping your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar in check is not only important to maintain good heart health, but to keep your brain healthy.

EVIDENCE

TILDA Participants with better cardiovascular health are less likely to have cognitive decline compared to those who report poorer cognitive health.



TIP SIX: KEEP MENTALLY ACTIVE

Keep your brain active by engaging in new and challenging activities that you enjoy, like doing crosswords, puzzles, playing cards, music and more.

EVIDENCE

TILDA Participants who often engage in leisure and social activities have better cognitive performance. Engaging in these types of activities helps to keep your brain sharp and can also reduce stress levels.



TIP EIGHT: CHECK HEARING

Make sure you can hear well. Use hearing aids for hearing loss. Reduce hearing loss by protecting your ears from excessive noise.

EVIDENCE

TILDA Participants who report excellent to good hearing are better able to maintain cognitive function than those who reported poorer hearing.

Did you know that life expectancy continues to improve in Ireland?



Female life
expectancy at birth

84.3



Male life
expectancy at birth

80.4



Life expectancy has increased by 3 years for males and by almost 2 years for females since 2007!

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