

### **Mind Matters**

Whether you are calculating complex statistics, or simply trying to stay alert during a long meeting, keeping your mind sharp matters. Luckily, the steps to exercising your brain are easier than you may think.

“Exercise is just as healthy for your mind as it is for your body,” explains Joel Feder, D.O., an osteopathic Family Practice, practicing in Overland Park, Kansas]. “Regular physical exercise will not only help your cardiovascular health, but it will increase blood flow to the brain and help with your creativity and memory.”

In addition, the calming benefits of exercising will reduce stress, which can cause memory problems, and help prevent depression, which slows thinking. Exercise clears the mind and allows for creative thinking and a problem-solving state of mind. For example, studies have shown that after walking for 15 minutes, especially in a natural setting as opposed to alongside a highway, individuals will increase their memory and ability to multi-task by more than 15 percent. Relaxation techniques, such as yoga and meditation, are also beneficial for the brain.

“There are many ways to keep your mind active,” explains Dr. Feder. Some ideas he recommends are:

- Stay curious and involved
- Work crosswords or other puzzles
- Attend lectures and plays
- Continue your education
- Play games
- Try memory exercises

There are several different memory techniques and exercises. One technique is called over-learning. This means that the individual would repeat and study something more than the topic might normally require. This technique might be employed when meeting new people. Oftentimes, repeating the new name several times will help with remembering the person’s name later.

Another memory technique that helps with remembering short lists of items is called the link or story method.

“Using this method, you would simply make up a story that links together the different items you want to remember,” explains Dr. Feder.

Dr. Feder further explains that memory exercises can help fight age-related memory loss such as dementia.

Dementia is a neurological disorder that affects the ability to think, speak, reason, remember and move. The most common form of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, involves a loss of nerve cells in the areas of the brain that control memory and other mental functions. The first sign of Alzheimer's disease is usually forgetfulness. As the disease progresses, it affects language, reasoning and understanding.

The precise cause of Alzheimer's disease is unknown, but risk increases with age. According to the Alzheimer's Association, one in six women and one in ten men will develop Alzheimer's in their remaining lifetime.

“It is important to make decisions today that will help you later in life,” explains Dr. Feder. “Keeping both your mind and body active is a great start.”

In addition to exercise for the brain and body, Dr. Feder also recommends incorporating healthy vitamins and minerals in your diet, including Vitamins E, B, and C, and Magnesium.

“It's important that you consult your doctor if forgetfulness or mind lapses ever become disruptive in your daily routine and before taking any supplements,” Dr. Feder cautions.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. Osteopathic physicians are fully-licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.