

Accumulating Risk Factors Throughout Our Life

► The day we are born:

- We have a clean slate – except if you are born with the ApoE 4 gene
- Then you start out with a 7% risk of dementia

► Early Life:

- Normally you don't pick up any risk factors; however, if you have **less education** at this life stage you pick up an 8% risk

► Midlife:

- Midlife is the time that the body starts to pay for the wild and crazy life we might have been living.
- You increase your risk:
 - 9% with **hearing loss**
 - 2% with **hypertension**
 - 1% with **obesity**

► Late life:

- You pay the piper in late life. You increase your risk with these poor lifestyle choices:
 - 5% risk with **smoking**
 - 4% risk with **depression**
 - 3% risk with **physical inactivity**
 - 2% risk with **social isolation**
 - 2% risk with **diabetes**



Calm – Stress

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Keep a stress journal – see if you can figure out the trigger for your stress
- Record how you react to stressful events
- Practice taking a deep breath in to quiet your reactions when you are in the middle of a stressful event
- Practice written responses to use when diffusing stress
- Have a planned reaction to stress – take a walk, do yoga, pray, meditate – whatever you need to get you centered
- Practice being optimistic – even in the face of stress
- Surround yourself with family and friends – know who has your back in tough situations

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Challenge – Mental Stimulation

Here are some ideas to get you started

- Participate in activities that are creative and artistic
- Establish a night a week for family board games, card games or interactive games. Get everyone involved
- Go to museums, plays, even neighborhood amateur productions. Discuss whatever you saw, learned or participated in
- Learn a second language
- Join a book club – read and discuss books of all kinds
- Travel – it can even be to a different part of town where you are not familiar with the route to get there, shops and restaurants that are new to you
- Volunteer
- Enjoy music – from playing an instrument to listening to a concert
- Enroll in online brain training. Stick with it and see if it makes a difference in your brain function

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Connect – Socialization

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Invite friends and family to your home
- Have fun together and play board games, complete a jigsaw puzzle, or just talk
- Make plans with friends and family to do something new – like going to a museum, seeing a play, going to a sporting event
- Find out if there are any book clubs or discussion groups you can join
- Seek out lecture series within the community that you can attend (e.g. OLLI – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – usually in partnership with local universities)
- Volunteer, mentor, become active in a charity or other community organization.
- Use modern technology to increase socialization. Become part of the social network.
- Find your bliss (purpose). Try daydreaming where there are no bounds to your thoughts. Write down all of your thoughts and see if any of those thoughts resonate with you.

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MOVE – Physical Exercise

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take daily or nightly walks with family or friends.
- Physical exercise two or three times per week reduces the risk of Alzheimer's.
- Get a pedometer or use your smart phone to keep track of your steps per day. Aim high – 10,000 steps per day!
- Consider dance classes. Pattern dance, waltz, tango or polka all work great. If you are really ambitious try out those jitterbug steps from long ago.
- Put some resistance training in your exercise schedule. Resistance training improves muscle mass and increases our slowing metabolism.
- Keep a journal of the benefits you experience from exercising.

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Nourish – Nutrition

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take a list of brain healthy foods and make a trip to the grocery store. Consciously make an effort to buy foods that will support your brain healthy lifestyle and make your recipes more brain healthy.
- Keep a basket of fresh fruits that are filled with brain-boosting antioxidants in your kitchen.
- Consider keeping a journal for two weeks of what you eat on a daily basis. This can help you become conscious of what you are eating and perhaps why you eat certain foods. You might be surprised how much easier it is to incorporate more brain healthy foods into your diet.
 - Keep journals of what foods you eat throughout the day to ensure that you are eating brain healthy foods

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Sleep

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Keep a sleep journal to track:
- Your bedtime routine and note any of the activities that might interfere with sleep
- Your sleep patterns and see how close your waking and sleeping times coincide with normal circadian rhythms
- If you are having memory problems, look at your sleeping habits and routines. Note if you are taking sleeping medications. Sleeping medications are not meant for long-term use
- Work towards achieving healthy sleep patterns including an awareness of how easily you can 'talk' yourself into insomnia
- Find out if you snore during the night. Check with your doctor about having a sleep study done to determine the cause of your snoring
- Keep a journal by your bed and write down your dreams as soon as you wake up.

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