

4 Key Strategies to

Keep Your Brain Healthy

McKnight Brain Research Foundation Trustee, Dr. Richard Isaacson recently sat down with Dr. Sanjay Gupta, neurologist and CNN Chief Medical Correspondent, to get his top take-aways from writing the best selling book, *Keep Sharp*.

Dr. Gupta's top tips to help you stay resilient as you age boil down to:



Move

Countless studies have shown that the brain prefers a body in motion, and it doesn't take a lot of exercise to reap enormous benefits. Even just two hours of activity every hour can boost brain health more than anything else you can possibly do. Shift your mindset to think of inactivity as the disease, rather than exercise as the cure. Every time you're about to sit, ask if you could stay standing instead.



Nourish

Follow the SHARP dietary protocol: Slash sugar; Hydrate (even being dehydrated a few ounces can affect cognition); Add more omega-3 fatty acids from foods like cold-water fish, nuts, and seeds; Reduce portion; and Plan ahead.



Rest

Like exercise, restorative sleep is an antidote to mental decline. Together, they are matchless medicine we can't get elsewhere. Sleep tidies memory while physical activity pumps out substances in the brain that act like a fertilizer on brain cells for their growth and survival. This allows us to continually learn new skills and explore new hobbies that are stimulating, de-stressing, and rewarding – all good things for staying sharp.



Engage

Another recent finding in science has been that the strength of our relationships is much more essential to our health – and healthspan, or how long we live in good health – than previously recognized. Instead of spending time passively using a computer screen to binge-watch shows or scroll aimlessly through the internet, use that time in virtual chats with friends and family. I like to say, **connection for protection**, even when physically distanced. And when you can see people in person, focus on eye contact; it's more important than ever to ease the stress of masked faces.



While these strategies may sound extraordinarily simple, they work. Your brain is command central for itself and the body, and it is possible to make your brain sharper than it has ever been in the past. Do not accept the false idea that brain decline is unavoidable. While many organs do wither and decline with age, the brain is different, and it is well within your reach to stay cognitively intact into old age.”

– Dr. Sanjay Gupta
Neurosurgeon



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