

KEEP YOUR BRAIN YOUNG

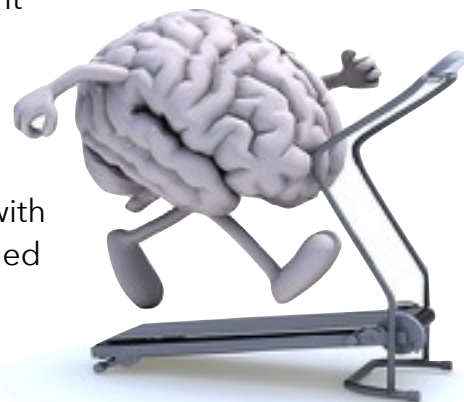


With an aging population and continued projected increases for age-related cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, these findings show that older adults may be able to delay the onset of cognitive decline through exercise.

For many, physical therapy is about keeping their independence. The goal is to increase strength and improve balance and posture to reduce the risk of falls. The physical benefits of regular physical activity are widely known; however, the same factors that protect overall health protect the brain as well.

Your Brain Wants You To Exercise

While your brain only makes up a small portion of your body, it gets 15% of your total blood flow. Recent studies show that moderate-to-vigorous exercise can reduce the risk of cognitive decline by up to 36%. Exercise increases circulation throughout the body, which can help to nourish the white matter in the brain. This white matter is associated with executive function--critical thinking--in adults. A study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* found that adults with higher cardiorespiratory fitness had less deterioration of white matter when compared to their less-fit peers.

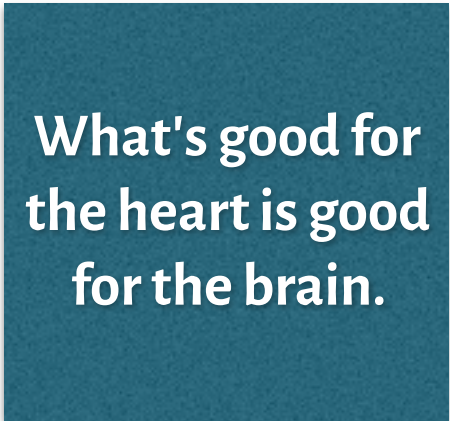


This cognitive decline can be predicted long before the first lapses in memory or behavioral changes. It has been suggested that slow gait and gait abnormalities are early signs during the onset of cognitive decline. While relatively unknown a decade ago, a growing body of evidence indicates that medical providers may be able to help delay or minimize patients' symptoms of dementia through prescribed physical therapy and exercise.

How Can Physical Therapy Help?

As movement experts, physical therapists can design exercise programs for people with a variety of health conditions, including dementia and Alzheimer's. These programs help to maintain physical function longer and at a higher level, ultimately improving quality of life. The same factors that protect overall health, protect the brain. Instead of merely relying on medication, include a healthy diet, brain-stimulating activities, social engagement, and other tools to empower them to improve their own future.

If you or someone you know could benefit from physical therapy, let us know. Physical therapy has benefits for almost any patient at any stage of a neurodegenerative disease.



**What's good for
the heart is good
for the brain.**

If you're unsure if physical therapy is right for you or your loved one, we offer **FREE 15-minute screens** that are one-on-one with the physical therapist. During this free screen, the therapist will evaluate an area of concern and present their recommendations for treatment.

If you'd like to schedule a free screening call our office at:
(308) 872-5800 and mention this newsletter.