

[IMAGE]

Exercise Your Mind

By Staff Editorial

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth most common cause of death in the U.S. As brain cells progressively fail, sufferers experience problems with memory, thinking and behavior. These symptoms can complicate work, hobbies and social life. While there currently is no cure for Alzheimer's, several risk factors have been identified, including age, family history and genetics. Not much you can do about any of that, right? Fortunately, researchers also have identified several modifiable risk factors, such as heart health and healthy aging, which may help prevent the disease.

For example, a new study suggests exercise improves cognition in adults at risk for Alzheimer's disease. According to the study, adults ages 50 and older who are physically active are less likely to experience cognitive decline than inactive adults. Researchers are not clear yet as to why exercise acts as a guard against memory loss; however, they speculate it may be related to "improved cerebral vascular function and neurovascular integrity associated with exercise." The adults, who mainly walked as their form of physical activity, also may have benefited cognitively through exposure to a stimulating environment. Adults with severe cognitive impairment such as dementia, psychiatric disorders or sensory loss were not included in the study.

An estimated 5 million Americans currently suffer from Alzheimer's. Don't be a statistic - if you're already exercising regularly, keep it up. If not, start exercising today and do what you can to maintain sound mind and body, no matter your age.

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