

# Taking Charge of Your Brain Health

## Be Physically Active

The human brain, sometimes called the “3 pound universe within,” is one of your most vital organs. It plays a role in every action and every thought and just like the rest of your body, it needs to be looked after. By making healthy lifestyle choices now, you may be able to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease and improve your brain’s ability to sustain long-term health.

This sheet is part of a series that provides practical action steps, based on current research, which you can take to improve your brain health. Will it prevent Alzheimer’s disease?

There are no guarantees, but healthy lifestyle choices will help keep your brain as healthy as possible as you age. And since a healthier brain can withstand illness better, it’s important to take action on the things you can control -- lifestyle choices.



Research is showing that moderate physical activity promotes brain health.

People who exercise regularly are less likely to develop heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which are all conditions that are associated with an increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. In addition to improving your general health, physical activity is also beneficial for your brain health. Even moderate physical activity promotes the circulation of blood to the brain, which nourishes the cells with nutrients and oxygen, and may even encourage the development of new cells.

**Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy and Active Living** is designed to help us make wise choices about physical activity—choices to improve health, help prevent disease and allow people to get the most out of life.

**Heads  
Up for  
Healthier  
Brains**

*Alzheimer Society*



## Take Action on Being Active

- Think of it as “activity” not “exercise.” For those who feel they have little opportunity to exercise, start by adding a bit of physical activity into your daily routine. Choose a brisk walk to the store rather than driving the car, or wash and wax the car instead of going to the car wash.
- Choose activities and sports that you enjoy.
- Aerobic activities can help maintain general fitness. For example, many experts recommend walking as one of the safest and most effective forms of aerobic exercise.
- Start where you can and set reasonable goals.
- Plan physical activity with another person so that you are more likely to keep active while you also gain the brain-healthy benefits of social interaction.
- Check with your doctor about the kinds of physical activity that might be right for you or if you have specific health concerns.

Resources: Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (Healthy Living)

Note: Your abilities, health situation and interests should be taken into consideration when choosing brain healthy activities. If you have questions about your own situation, speak to your doctor or health-care provider.

See the following sheets in the Taking Charge of Your Brain Health series: Challenge Yourself, Be Socially Active, Make Healthy Food Choices, Reduce Stress, Protect Your Head, Choose Wisely. Also available is a reference list of studies regarding Alzheimer’s disease and brain health.

**Find out more - [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca) or contact your local Alzheimer Society:**

# Alzheimer *Society*

Alzheimer Society of Canada  
20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1200, Toronto, ON M4R 1K8  
Tel: (416) 488-8772 1-800-616-8816 Fax: (416) 488-3778  
E-mail: [info@alzheimer.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.ca) Website: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)