

Four Daily Tasks That Could Reduce the Risk of Dementia

Reducing the risk of dementia has long been thought of as mainly about diet and cutting out smoking and drinking. While these are still true, new studies show four simple daily tasks can reduce the risk of dementia.

With [more than 7 million Americans over 65 living with dementia in 2020](#), it's a condition that so many of us are all too familiar with.

At Visiting Angels, we're always keen to promote and learn about new dementia-tackling techniques, so we've taken these rather complicated studies and reports to put them into easy-to-understand tips:

1. Exercise and Physical Activity

30-80% Reduced Risk of Dementia

Multiple studies keep revealing the same thing - dementia and Alzheimer's are found less in people who exercise.

[In a 2022 study between the University of California in San Francisco and the University of British Columbia](#), striking results were found. *Dementia risk was reduced by 30-80% of people who exercised regularly.*

Later in life, physical exercise seems to protect aging connections between brain cells (the place where memories are made and retrieved). The belief is that exercise could actually mimic some aspects of drugs, prescribed to slow the onset of dementia.

150 minutes of exercise per week is advised to keep the body active in midlife and senior years.

Daily Exercises That Could Improve Brain Health

Of course, with age physical activity becomes harder and harder. Depending on the strength and flexibility available, you may be able to perform:

- Walking
- Gentle aerobic exercise
- Water aerobics
- Strength training
- Arm and leg exercise
- Chair yoga
- Resistance band workouts
- Pilates

Senior caregivers are famously very helpful when it comes to physical activity. For example, if the senior is reluctant to take a walk due to fear (or genuine risk) of tripping and falling, then the in-home caregiver can provide a helping hand on the walk.

Or, for the more physically capable, they can provide transport that helps the senior get to and from the place of exercise.

2. Improving Hearing

Loss of Hearing Leads to Faster Brain Shrinkage

It came as a surprise to us, but dementia prevention can be boosted by enabling or protecting the use of hearing.

Poor hearing around middle age is common, but without acting on it you can increase the risk of dementia. [Studies show that brain scans revealed poor hearing led to faster brain shrinkage](#) (a leading cause of dementia).

Hearing loss also leads to social isolation and less communication. Less brain stimulation is a major issue, with music, audiobooks and radio all becoming neglected rather than embraced.

Hearing Aids Can Be a Brain Aid

The good news is, by solving this you can work to keep the dementia risk at bay. By wearing a hearing aid, you can significantly improve the use of the ears.

Sadly, hearing aids still have a stigma attached with many people reluctant to wear them, especially around middle age. By becoming aware of the health benefits, people may be able to break down these walls.

[Hearing impairment is found to account for 8% of dementia.](#) With less stimulation, the temporal lobes (which process sound, emotions and memories) begin to shrink.

3. Keep on Learning

Protect the Cognitive Reserves!

Brain training games have long been popular among aging Americans. But there may be a need to go deeper to keep the brain mentally engaged.

Researchers say keeping the brain active builds a 'cognitive reserve', allowing the brain to cope better as pathologies take hold, therefore reducing the risk of dementia.

Making new connections in the brain through unfamiliar and complex issues can keep it fresh and active. The best way to keep learning to prevent dementia is through a varied set of cognitively complex tasks.

To do this you can consider:

- Mentally challenging hobbies
- Staying socially active
- Mixing with new people
- Learning new topics, through books, documentaries, films and arts.

Stay Social

Staying socially active is easier said than done, as with age comes a tendency to find complex tasks overwhelming and tiring. Especially for introverted types. However, you might not need to take on vastly drastic tasks. Small changes in day-to-day life with fresh challenges can go a long way.

Senior home care services are famously great for keeping seniors' minds active and challenged positively. A caregiver can encourage the senior to take on new tasks in small doses.

For example, social activities can be hard to attend when transport and arrangements become hurdles. That's where a caregiver can help, by providing transport, being a helping hand and keeping on-top of schedules. Or they can help make video calls and internet use safe and easy, rather than overwhelming and frustrating.

They can also help when it comes to those low points in the day when it's easier to turn on the TV and zone out. While that's sometimes got its value, having a caregiver there during the day's lulls can encourage the senior to pick up that hobby they'd otherwise neglect.

4. Maintaining Dental Health

Increasing Rate in Dementia for Those With Poor Dental Hygiene

Another more unusual suggestion to prevent dementia is prioritizing dental health.

[A recent study on gum disease and mouth infection](#) claims that those with dental hygiene issues were at greater risk to develop Alzheimer's, leading to dementia.

Studies have now started to check whether bacteria (including *Porphyromonas gingivalis*) are driving Alzheimer's, or increasing the rate of disease for those in the early stages of dementia. If true, as this study claims, then it would be wise to make dental health a top priority.

Keep it Simple

Cleaning your teeth and flossing every day may seem simple enough to most, but for the aging community, it is a common problem - particularly those with Alzheimer's or Dementia.

These tips can help those suffering from the diseases to stay on top of their dental health:

- Short, simple instructions
- 'Tutorials', like "copy this" as you show the individual how to brush their teeth.
- Keep the whole mouth clean, such as the tongue, gums and roof of the mouth.

Senior home caregivers are great at providing support with daily hygiene tasks. They can ensure the individual always brushes their teeth, with care as part of a comfortable daily hygiene routine.

And Not Forgetting... Diet

Of course, this information does not negate the need to keep a healthy diet and lifestyle. That is the overriding message in all dementia studies.

A [recent study of 35,000 people found that healthy Mediterranean diets were linked to a 21% lower risk of cognitive disorders](#) and a 40% lower risk of Alzheimer's disease.

A healthy diet is key to lower blood pressure, better vascular health and less risk of obesity and diabetes.

A senior caregiver can play a pivotal role in improving the diet of a senior. Cooking and meal prep is tiring and overwhelming at the best of times, but when age takes it toll then a helping hand is needed. A caregiver can maintain a healthy diet, by safely preparing nutritious meals every day (if needed) and freezing more for when the caregiver isn't around.

Contact Us to Refer Senior Home Care Services in Tampa, FL and Pasco and North Pinellas Counties

If you or a loved one in your life are concerned about the onset of dementia or need assistance with daily life, [Contact Visiting Angels](#) today to arrange a referral of a professional caregiver to provide [Senior Home Care in Tampa, FL](#).

Whether you're ready to get started or would like to learn more, we'll be happy to have a conversation with you or your loved one.

You can call us at 813-909-2550 or 727-841-8440 today - Available 24/7 to talk with a Visiting Angels Representative.