

Healthy Habits for Healthy Aging: Expand Your Mind

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Just as physical activity keeps your body strong, mental activity keeps your mind sharp and agile. That's why it's important to continue to learn and challenge yourself — whether it's by learning a foreign language, switching careers or doing crossword puzzles. As one Japanese proverb states, “We begin aging when we stop learning.”

The mind plays an integral role in our health. It's important to wake up every morning and look forward to the day — and an essential part of that means continuing to learn and keeping an active mind.

When you give a plant the right elements — some water and sun — it will generally grow. Put simply, the same is true for your brain. Regardless of age, an active brain produces new dendrites, which are connections between nerve cells that allow these cells to communicate with one another. This helps you store and retrieve information more easily, even if your gray matter is topped by gray hair. To continue expanding your mind, try these tips:

- * Take classes — anything from a community education class to a college course.
- * Read regularly and keep a journal.
- * Stay up-to-date on technology. Learn about computers and connect to the Internet. Consider using e-mail to stay in touch with friends and family.
- * Join a book club or other discussion group.
- * Explore the cultural life of your community. Attend concerts, lectures and plays.
- * Continue musical or artistic talents or develop new ones.
- * Teach others your skills or knowledge.

Although it's true that older people in general learn differently than younger people and have more difficulty with short-term memory, old age isn't an automatic slide into dementia. Numerous studies show that older people can and do learn new things — and learn them well. Age provides wisdom and experience that help with integrating new knowledge into your life. Seeking out new learning opportunities, practicing existing skills and embracing change can help you stay mentally fit no matter what your age.

Need more information?

Ask Dr. Vadim Cherdak, Certified Senior Adviser, for comprehensive in-depth discussion of your needs and to create a plan of care. Dr Cherdak also provides lectures and seminars on different topics related to Senior's Health and Wellbeing for public organizations and congregations.



Affinity Care provides professional Home Health Care for Seniors and Disabled. Call us with your questions: **732-790-2796** or e-mail: sc@AffinityCareNJ.com.

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Affinity constantly searches, trains and employs the best caregivers in Central NJ.