

## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



### Brain Health Matters National Take a Hike Day Makes a Difference

*Grab your walking shoes, your water, and a brain healthy snack because this week BHI is celebrating **National Take a Hike Day**, which encourages you to get outside for scenery and exercise by tackling the miles of trails, sidewalks, beaches, and other places safe for taking a walk along and within the Suncoast region.*

Among the many health and fitness benefits of hiking on your body, it's a great way to get that brain and heart pumping while you breathe in pristine air. If hiking isn't your thing — or simply isn't an option — get outside and [take a walk](#); a 30-minute walk is loaded with brain healthy benefits. Grab a friend, put a smile on your face, and walk 6 feet apart.

If you're looking for a brain healthy snack to fuel your adventure, skip the store-bought trail mix and try making this recipe instead.

#### Brain Healthy Trail Mix

*Combine a mix of dried fruits, berries, granola, nuts, and seeds. It is a great source of protein, magnesium, zinc, iron, B vitamins, vitamin A and C; moreover, this combination is ideal food to fuel your brain health.*

1. Nuts – Feel free to use any kind of nut. Ideally, purchase raw nuts that haven't been coated and roasted in hydrogenated or soybean oils and salt. Try roasting them for an added toastiness.
2. Seeds – Often overlooked for the health benefits of nuts, seeds actually pack a serious nutritional punch including protein, iron, magnesium and an array of vitamins and minerals. Look for raw, unsalted seeds.
3. Dried Fruit – Because of the high sugar content in dried fruit, they're a great snack to help boost your low blood sugar after a high dose of physical activity. Try to use sun dried fruit that isn't coated in sugar and is ideally unsulfured. It's more expensive, but it's worth it.
4. Fun Stuff!– Just because it's healthy doesn't mean you can't throw in a little fun! It's all about

balance, so feel free to add in a handful of your favorite decadent or healthified decadent treat. Dark chocolate and popcorn are options, but you can also add pretzels, peanut butter chips or other sweet treat.

#### **Customizable version:**

- 1 1/2 cups raw nuts (almonds, pecans, cashews, peanuts)
- 1 cup raw seeds (sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds)
- 1 cup unsweetened, unsulphured dried fruit
- Fun stuff (amounts vary) (e.g., 1/2 cup chopped dark chocolate, 1 cup popped popcorn, 1 cup pretzels)
- Spice (e.g., 1/4 tsp sea salt, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, pinch of nutmeg)

#### **Trail Mix Recipe**

- 3/4 cup raw pecans (you can toast in the oven for 10 mins at 350 degrees F)
- 3/4 cup raw cashews (you can toast them in the oven for 10 mins at 350 degrees F)
- 1/2 cup raw sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, unsulfured cherries
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, unsulfured raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped 82% dark chocolate
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg

Optional: If you really need the extra sweetness, you can coat the mix with 2 T maple syrup, spread it out on a baking sheet and allow it to dry before bagging.

#### **Instructions**

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.
2. Store in a ziploc bag or mason jar.
3. Will keep for up to 1 month.

#### **About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))**

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI works collaboratively with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention and optimization of performance*. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference***. To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).