

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Physical Activity Boosts the Immune System and Brain Health Matters

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond.

Physical activity is one of the Brain Health Initiative’s protective factors of brain health. Exercise improves blood flow to, and within, the brain providing the oxygen and nutrients it needs for optimal health and performance.

Multiple studies show exercise can be as effective as drugs or talk therapy as a treatment for brain illness like depression. Exercise improves your quality of sleep, another brain health protective factor. Physical activity enhances cognitive performance across the lifespan and builds powerful brain and cognitive reserve across the lifespan while decreasing risks for cognitive decline later in life. But did you know that physical activity is also a powerful tool in boosting your immune system?

Good nutrition and healthy sleep may be the first things you think of when it comes to a healthy immune system, but moderate exercise also plays a significant role in keeping you safe from illness. So, get up and get moving! Exercise is more important now than ever.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

You don’t have to become a gym rat to boost your immunity. Regular, moderate exercise gets the blood pumping and starts boosting your mood and immune system functioning. Whether you’re a beginner or you workout regularly, it’s easy to get moving.

The ideal brain health physical activity program includes aerobics, resistance, strength training and mind-body activities, like yoga and tai chi. No matter what, remember some exercise is better than none.

Walk. A brisk walk is great exercise and no special equipment is required

Bike. Florida provides an ideal environment for riding a bike — no hills! Set a leisurely pace and enjoy the scenery.

Swim. Now is a great time to put that pool to use. Swimming is great low-impact exercise and it feels great on hot days.

Get on the treadmill. If it's too hot or too stormy to go outside, go for a walk on the treadmill. You know, that thing you've been hanging clothes on for the past few years.

Stand up for your health. Find as many opportunities throughout the day to stand instead of sit.

Move, dance, skip, hula hoop, gallop, walk backwards and sideways-be silly.

Smile while you move and grab a friend for extra benefit.

It's easy to get a workout at home. Start slowly but keep at it and make physical activity part of your brain healthy daily routine.

About the Brain Health Initiative (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 is a collaborative effort with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, 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](#).