

5 Ways to Keep Your Brain Sharp As You Age

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Important parts of the brain tend to atrophy as we get older—yet brain scans of some 70-year-olds [resemble](#) those of 20 to 30-year-olds. Emerging research points to habits that may keep the mind sharp during the aging process. “Despite the stereotypes, cognitive decline is not inevitable as you age, and adopting healthy lifestyle habits can significantly reduce your risks for dementia later on in life,” says Sarah Lenz Lock, AARP’s senior vice president and executive director of the Global Council on Brain Health.

Start socializing

“Social isolation [increases dementia risk](#) by 50%” in older adults, says Lock. “The link is unmistakable.” You don’t need to collect a whole crew of companions, however; [a few close friends](#) can be enough. Instead of seeking as many friends as possible, focus on [building the social circles](#) that satisfy your individual needs, like spending more time with [neighbors](#), [volunteering](#) at a community center or adopting a [pet](#).

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