

# The best activities and diet for brain health

A healthy brain is as easy as making small changes to your daily lifestyle.



**THE VILLAGE AT  
ORCHARD RIDGE**

A National Lutheran Community

Exercising your mind to keep it active is important, especially as you grow older. Learn some of the best ways to stay sharp through brain games, healthy eating and social activity:

- **Arts and crafts:** A great way to involve your hands and mind, arts and crafts can be a fun way to let your creative side shine through. Creating gifts for loved ones, or even wall art for your home will not only keep your mind busy, but it's also a lot of fun!
- **Jigsaw puzzles:** Puzzles are a great way to keep your mind active. The benefits to completing a jigsaw puzzle include helping older adults relax and stimulating the mind. Start out with puzzles that have fewer pieces and then gradually increase the difficulty level for a challenge.
- **Play chess:** Chess is a game of strategy and forethought, which is why it's a great game to help stimulate your brain. Chess may seem like a difficult game to pick up, but with a little practice you can catch on quickly. Chess is also available to play online, so if you don't have someone to play with, or you want to brush up on your skills, explore virtual chess sites to compete against players all over the world!



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## Brain Health Benefits of Staying Social:

- **Longevity:** People who have more support socially, whether from family, friends, or caretakers, often live longer than those who may not have that social support. Social interaction is proven to extend lifespan, even after accounting for other health problems.
- **Reduces the risk for depression:** Low social support from family and friends can be associated with chronic depression. As we age, it's important to socialize with those around you so that you don't isolate yourself. When people isolate themselves, they are susceptible to becoming depressed more easily, which leads to further isolation.
- **Delays the onset of dementia:** Recently, there has been more evidence that socializing is good for your brain health, especially memory. People with more active social lives may be less likely to develop dementia and other mental health issues than those who are more socially isolated.

## Best Foods for your Brain:

- **Fish:** Studies show that eating fish like salmon, tuna, or halibut a few times per week can slow mental degeneration. These types of fish contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids which decrease the risk of memory loss.
- **Broccoli:** Rich in vitamin K and choline, broccoli can contribute to memory function and focus. It's also high in fiber, which can reduce the level of inflammation in the brain. Broccoli is a great side to add to your dinner plate or use in a stir-fry.
- **Avocados:** Avocados have become more popular in recent years and are also very good for the brain. Avocados contain monounsaturated fat, which helps create a healthy blood flow to the brain. They also lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of hypertension.



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