

'CS Tips' for a Healthy Mind

Mental decline is common, and it's one of the most feared consequences of aging. But this cognitive impairment is not inevitable. Here are 10 'CS Tips' you can use to help reduce your risk of age-related memory loss. (Note, some of the 'CS Tips' are an overlap with those recommended for a 'Healthy Heart' in the previous edition of the Shashtra News letter)

1. **Cerebral Stimulation**, which implies regular mental exercise and activity. These activities help retain old neuronal connections, besides building up newer connections, thus adding a functional reserve against age induced neuronal loss. Simple word puzzles (like crosswords), and use of learnt maths skills like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (WITHOUT the use of a Calculator!), retain a lot of brain activity.
2. **Concentrate** and **Solve** small tasks, that require manual dexterity and mental effort, like drawing, painting or any other hobby of craft.
3. **Create Stamina**, in that one should get regular physical exercise. A daily walk, at one's pace of comfort is most useful, along with an active gentle stretch of all muscle groups, is advocated. This exercise will increase the number of tiny blood vessels that bring oxygen-rich blood to the region of the brain that is responsible for thought.
4. **Correct Selection** of food intake, ensuring adequate calorie intake (NOT excessive...!), of right foods, and also with enough of the Vitamin B components of B6 (Pyridoxine), B9 (Folic Acid) and B12 (Cyanocobalamin). The green leafy vegetables are a good source of these.
5. **Control Sugar** and **Salt** intake, so that one does not have issues with uncontrolled Diabetes or Blood Pressure, both of which are not good for mental health.
6. **Cease Spirits** (Alcohol) abuse. Controlled intake of alcohol is a social stimulant, but excesses MUST be avoided. Needless to add, **Smoking** is also detrimental to mental health, and should be stopped.
7. **Combat Stress**. People, who are anxious, depressed, or exhausted, tend to score poorly on mental function tests. Learn to walk away from

stressful situations. Plan, prepare and do work systematically, so that stress factors are reduced.

8. **Companions** and **Soul mates** are very important. One should always be in a circle of likeminded friends and relatives, who offer companionship and cheer. *Solitude in the senior years is by far the easiest way to endanger mental function.* Make sure you attend as many KSCASI/ASI/IMA activities as possible!! Professional friends are life long, and they are the ones who pickup changes in one's persona and abilities, and will be most helpful to help sort or correct the same for you.
9. **Cash Sufficiency.** Plan one's life and resources, so that economic self-reliance in the senior years is ensured.
10. **Comfortable Sleep.** Sleep deprivation over time leads to early brain fatigue and poor mental health. Anything less than 8 hours a day is unhealthy.

With best wishes for healthy minds for all,

Dr C S Rajan

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