

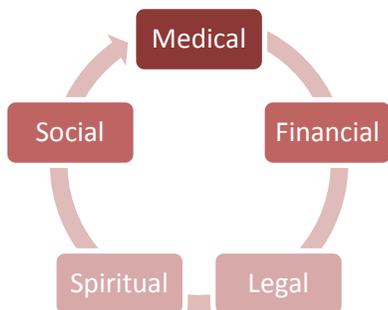
September 2012

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AACM and You: More Than Medicine

Medical and financial concerns are often the most visible and immediate eldercare issues. Not surprisingly, most of our clients come to us after being confronted with a medical or financial crisis.

When it comes to overall well-being, we believe that there's more to it than medicine. While advances in modern medicine continue to provide better treatments for the body and our physical ailments, our definition of "Care" extends well beyond the traditional domain of healthcare.



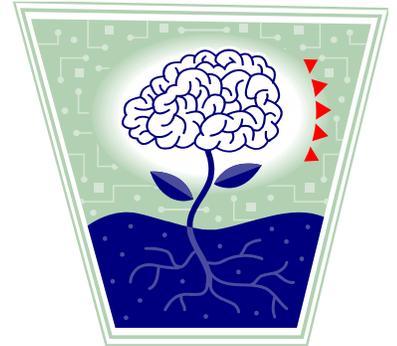
Our approach is both *holistic* and *realistic*. We aggressively address the immediate problems without losing focus on the complete individual. As science continues to uncover the links between our physical and our mental well-being, it becomes increasingly important for us to address our spiritual and social needs along with our medical ones.

In addition to connecting our clients with competent medical providers, we have had great results working with music therapists, dieticians, personal trainers and massage therapists, just to name a few.

Remember This: Brain Health in a Confusing World

Author: Meredith Patterson

With the rise in diagnosed cases of dementia and the failure of recent clinical trials for much-anticipated pharmaceutical drugs, Alzheimer's Disease now owns the dubious distinction as the most-feared disease in the country. And no wonder – the odds of having Alzheimer's (or related dementia illness) in a lifetime grow to approximately 50 percent for people reaching age 85.



Although Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, was identified and named by Dr. Alois Alzheimer in 1907, little was done in the realm of intervention, prevention or even formal diagnosis until decades later. The lack of attention to dementia was, in part, due to the lower incidence of the disease secondary to shorter life expectancy. People simply didn't live long enough to worry about losing their memories.

In the scramble to identify solutions to the problem of an exponentially-increasing dementia population, the concept of prevention has been introduced in brain health. Just as there are known interventions to prevent heart disease, are there viable lifestyle modifications - in exercise, diet and stress management for example - that might affect one's future risk of dementia? And, if so, would it be possible to decrease the projected affected population in any significant way?

The answer is an unequivocal "yes" according to results from a major study by the University of California and published in the July 2011 issue of *Lancet Neurology*. The researchers identified seven lifestyle factors – diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, depression, physical exercise, smoking and mental stimulation – and concluded that these factors contribute to as many as half of all Alzheimer's cases worldwide. Numerous research studies have looked at these areas and reached similar conclusions, and the reporting of relationships between dementia and myriad habits are linked. But which modifications "pack the most punch" to ensure a healthy brain and to minimize dementia risk?



EXERCISE:

By far, the most widely-supported evidence of a lifestyle practice's effect upon brain health is linked to daily physical exercise. The majority of researchers agree that exercise may reduce the risk of dementia by half, although some argument is made over the type and duration of exercise.

Exercise benefits the brain not just by helping to oxygenate it, but also by producing an abundance of a nifty little protein molecules called "neurotrophic factor," specifically known as Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF.) BDNF acts as a learning primer for the brain, supporting the neurons and helping the synapse connect more quickly, thus enabling the brain to be a better learner. Think of it as a kind of cerebral Miracle Grow®.

MENTAL ENGAGEMENT:

An emporium of products designed to enhance memory through games, software, books and training devices is now marketed to the graying population of baby boomers who nervously chuckle about their ever-increasing "senior moments." Like physical exercise, the argument goes, mental fitness is a use-it-or-lose-it proposition. Although some studies link levels of education and literacy to increased cognitive resilience, continued learning *throughout* life appears just as crucial for protecting the brain against memory decline. In his book "Keep Your Brain Alive", Dr. Lawrence Katz makes a strong case for incorporating non-routine activities that engage the senses, since the brain creates new neural pathways by novel activity. He calls such activities "Neurobics" and encourages readers to get their brains moving by making an ordinary activity unordinary. For example:

- PRACTICE WRITING WITH YOUR NON-DOMINANT HAND INSTEAD OF WITH YOUR DOMINANT HAND.
- DRIVE A DIFFERENT ROUTE USING DIFFERENT STREETS TO WORK OR TO SCHOOL.
- TASTE FOOD WHILE BLINDFOLDED OR WHILE HOLDING YOUR NOSE.
- LISTEN TO A PIECE OF MUSIC AND TRY TO IDENTITY THE INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENTS INVOLVED.
- DO YOUR GROCERY SHOPPING AT A DIFFERENT STORE, AN ETHNIC STORE OR A FARMER'S MARKET.



Most people can identify specific areas of memory that they have the most trouble with – recalling names, dates, to-do lists, or slowness with information processing. In that regard, brain and memory training techniques can be more specific with intent to better recall or more quickly process information. The book "Brainfit" by Corrine Gediman addresses such common memory problem areas and groups the exercises and tips into specific categories. For example, if your problem is forgetting a list of items, using an acrostic method of remembering might be the ticket (using the first letter of each item and making it into a phrase). So if you need to remember to pay the **W**ater, **O**il, **E**lectric and **T**elephone bills, your memory acrostic might be "**W**e **O**ften **E**at **T**omatoes".

If it seems that your brain is sluggish and out of shape, mental exercise can sharpen and quicken mental processing. Like anything else, mental fitness takes practice, if even in small increments. Some examples:

- ♥ While waiting in line, practice spelling common nouns backwards in your head.
- ♥ Calculate your grocery store purchases in your cart **WITHOUT** a calculator and see how close your estimate compares to the checkout total.
- ♥ Get a foreign language dictionary and learn one new word from it every day.
- ♥ Sort a deck of cards into the four suits as quickly as possible. Time yourself with a stopwatch. The goal is to decrease the time required to complete the task.

VARY YOUR ROUTINE. THE BRAIN CRAVES NOVELTY, AND MIXING UP YOUR WORKOUTS MAKES IT FAR MORE INTERESTING AND LESS OF A CHORE.

DO SOMETHING THAT YOU'LL DO. SOUNDS SILLY, RIGHT? BUT IF YOU ABSOLUTELY HATE JOGGING, THEN BY NO MEANS ATTEMPT TO START A JOGGING PROGRAM. PLENTY OF OTHER AEROBIC EXERCISES ARE AVAILABLE.

SHOOT FOR 30 MINUTES A DAY, 5-6 DAYS A WEEK.

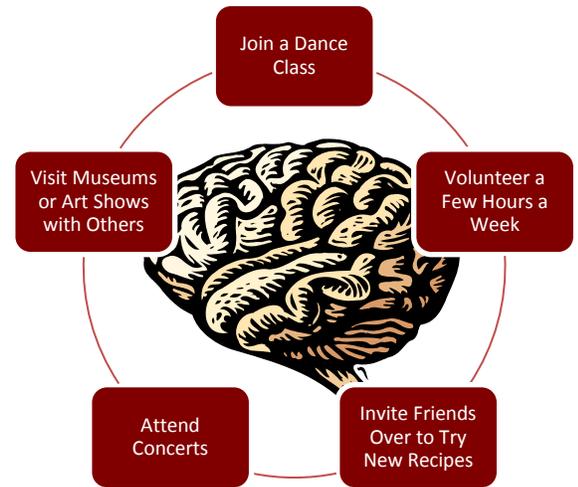
COMBINE AEROBIC WITH SOME STRENGTH TRAINING. AN EXAMPLE WORKOUT WOULD BE 20 MINUTES OF BRISK WALKING AND 10 MINUTES OF LIFTING LIGHT WEIGHTS.

GET A BUDDY TO WORKOUT WITH YOU IF YOU NEED A SOCIAL NUDGE TO GET YOU GOING.

INTEGRATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY. TAKE THE STAIRS INSTEAD OF THE ELEVATOR; PARK FURTHER AWAY FROM THE DOOR IN A PARKING LOT.

SOCIALIZATION:

Surprising as it may seem, having social relationships – family, friends, work colleagues, neighbors – is strongly linked to brain health. In fact, studies show that dementia is decreased in those who engage in group activities over solo efforts (think bridge-foursome rather than solitaire). Although it's unclear exactly how socialization affects dementia risk, a suggested possibility is that large areas of the brain - the frontal, temporal and parietal lobes – are stimulated with socialization along with the motor cortex.



NUTRITION, STRESS, AND GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Eat, rest, repair. The basic tenets of brain health follow the common sense that most of us realize – we need to fuel our bodies and brains properly, we need to take time to repair an over-taxed system, and we have to regularly get a full night's sleep to keep all the neurons firing.

Sadly, however, many people short themselves of proper nutrition and rest, piling on more responsibilities and obligations while ignoring the signals of ill health and a fuzzy brain. However, eating poorly and skating by on a few hours of sleep eventually erode the nervous system and can significantly contribute to problems in cognition. Some general tips:

- 🍷 Stick with fresh food over processed. Load up your plate with fruits and vegetables. Choose less refined, whole grain and rice products. Keep away from highly-sweetened simple carbohydrates and enjoy lean proteins, especially fish.
- 🍷 Set a regular bedtime and awakening schedule and try to stick to it as closely as possible.
- 🍷 "Compartmentalize" your life, leaving work problems at work and home problems at home. Try not to bring work-related projects home and allow time to truly be offline and unavailable by phone, text, or email.

Practicing good brain health is a lifestyle commitment that may require some new thinking about old habits. But ask yourself this: What is of higher priority than taking your full cognition with you for the rest of your years?

Meredith Patterson is a friend and former Care Manager at AACM. She is a registered nurse in the San Antonio/Austin area with over 25 years of clinical experience in neuroscience. She is a frequent speaker on brain health and research. Meredith's website and blog can be found at www.thebrainnurse.com.

Mary's Medicare Reminders

If you have a family member or client over 65 who is moving from one state to another, be alert to possible issues with Medicare and supplemental coverage. The Medicare website has good information on this and Accountable Aging is always available to consult with you about the issues.

Remember that open season for Medicare Part D begins October 15, 2012 and ends December 7, 2012. Plans change each year, covered drugs change, costs-per-drug change and premiums change, so it is a good idea to review often. If you need assistance with this, Accountable Aging can provide guidance here as well.



It is with heavy hearts that we bid farewell to **Janet Troutman**. Janet has been a fixture at Accountable Aging Care Management for more than 6 years. During her tenure, Janet's role grew along with the company. She has held many titles over the years, perhaps none more appropriate than Director of First Impressions. We hope that Janet will get to spend more time in her beloved Colorado.

Taking on Janet's role is **Lessa Ennis**. Lessa has a B.S. in Retail Management from Indiana University (Go Hoosiers!). In addition, she is a Master Gardener who has a strong heart for organ donation and volunteer work. Lessa also has extensive administrative experience at the college level. We are glad to welcome her to the team.

AACM President **Mary Koffend** was nominated for the Austin Business Journal *2012 Profiles in Power – Women of Influence* award. The event recognizes women in business who have made great strides for the community. Mary was both humbled and honored to receive recognition for her tireless work. Although she did not receive the award, there is little doubt who the *woman of influence* is around the Accountable Aging offices.

Those closest to him know that **Mick Koffend** is always in the mood to talk about taxes. In fact, he recently sent a letter to facilities in our 3 markets offering to present "You're Never Too Old to Pay Taxes!" free of charge to residents and their families. If you are interested in scheduling this, or any of our presentations, contact an AACM office. Visit our website for a list of presentations we offer.



Because referrals are the lifeblood of our business, the best way you can thank us, as a satisfied client, is by referring a friend, neighbor or colleague to us! We appreciate all your referrals.

Accountable Aging Care Management Team

Mary Koffend, President
Mick Koffend, Director of Services
Spencer Brown, MSG, LNFA, Care Manager
Mary Cooper, BS, RN, Care Manager
John Lloyd, Client Coordinator
Shannon Gray, Marketing Coordinator
Lindsey Hazlewood, Administrative Assistant
Kathleen McClain, Care Manager
Myra Richmond, MSG, CMC, Care Manager Consultant
Heidi Shanklin-Spock, LMSW, C-ASWCM, Care Manager
Mary Pat Smith, MSN, RN, CNS, Geriatric Nurse Consultant
Jennifer Tobey, Bill-Paying Clients & Resources Coordinator
Lessa Ennis, Office Manager

Austin 512.342.9800
Dallas 214.206.1696
San Antonio 210.568.7934

Visit us online: www.accountableaging.com

Accountable Aging Care Management is an eldercare consulting and care management firm.

Accountable Aging is a single source for older adults and their families to attain knowledge, resources and on-going assistance with the challenges related to aging or caring for an elder loved one. We serve older adults in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and the surrounding areas.

With this newsletter, our aim is to provide a trusted conduit for eldercare information and resources and to highlight the services we offer that meet the needs of older adults and their families.

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