

NEW GRAY MATTER

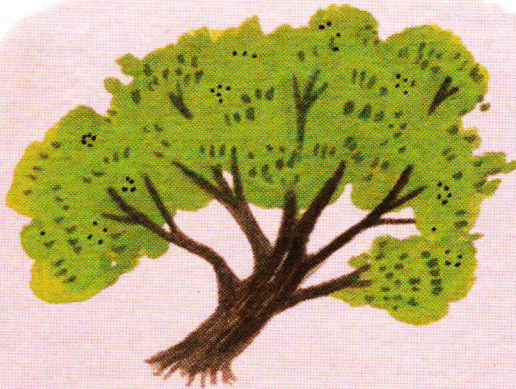
*Want to increase your coordination, brighten your mood, and stay sharp into old age?
Improving your brain may be easier than you think.*

BREAK A SWEAT

Good news: Even a little exercise grows brain cells. A 2011 study showed that older adults who walked just 40 minutes a day three days a week reversed age-related brain cell loss by one to two years.

TOSS IT

In a 2009 University of Oxford study, people who practiced juggling 30 minutes a day for six weeks grew new cells in areas of the brain associated with processing visual information into movement. Possible benefits include increased coordination and faster reflexes.



BREATHE DEEP

People who meditated as little as 20 minutes a day showed changes in the amygdala, which regulates emotion, according to a 2012 study. "These changes correlate with less depression and more happiness," says Gaëlle Desbordes, PhD, a researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital.

TOSS THE GPS

Research shows that older adults with better navigation skills have more gray matter in their hippocampi—and a decreased risk of dementia. —LARA KRISTIN HERNDON

ROLL IN THE HAY

In a study involving amorous rodents, Princeton researcher Elizabeth Gould showed that regular sex sprouts new cells in the hippocampus, where they help decrease anxiety.