

Stay active for better memory

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Healthways SilverSneakers® Fitness program can help

As you age you may begin to notice gaps in your memory. You may even think that forgetfulness is a normal part of aging. But according to the Centers for Disease Control, cognitive decline is *not* a normal part of aging. Normal changes may mean a slower pace of learning and the need to have information repeated, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're losing your memory.

Memory loss can be caused by a combination of factors, including:

- diseases such as Alzheimer's and depression
- side effects of medications
- strokes and head trauma
- poor nutrition
- stress
- lack of physical activity

As with many conditions that seem to come with age, cognitive decline, including memory loss, may be prevented or postponed. You have no doubt heard that it is important to exercise your mind in order to keep your brain healthy and performing at its peak. Usually, this advice refers to mental activities such as working on puzzles, playing cards, reading books and having a vibrant social life. But it turns out that physical activity also has a huge impact on brain health.¹

A 2011 study in older adults showed that brisk walking can increase the size of a brain region involved in forming memories (the hippocampus). The study's findings suggest that moderate physical exercise can help protect the brain as we age. Even inactive older adults may be able to stop or reverse age-related hippocampus shrinking in just one year of moderate aerobic activity.²

Continue reading for **good news** about getting physically active.



HEALTHWAYS
SilverSneakers[®]
FITNESS

Get fit your way™

So you can stay active and help prevent or postpone cognitive decline, Medicare health plans across the nation offer SilverSneakers Fitness at **no extra cost**. SilverSneakers gives members options:

- a fitness membership with access to more than 13,000 locations, with all basic amenities plus SilverSneakers classes
- SilverSneakers FLEX™ classes in your favorite neighborhood locations
- a member website to find fitness locations and FLEX classes, access fitness articles, download recipes and meal plans, and connect with the SilverSneakers online community
- SilverSneakers Steps® with a choice of four kits (general fitness, strength, walking or yoga)

SilverSneakers may already be your benefit. Find out now to take charge of your health!

For more information, visit the SilverSneakers website or call **1-888-423-4632** (TTY: **711**), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.

Check with your doctor before starting SilverSneakers or any exercise program.

1. <http://www.healthline.com/health-blogs/heart-smart-living/exercise-brain-health-memory>
2. <http://www.nih.gov/researchmatters/february2011/02282011exercise.htm>



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