

BEEFING UP THE MIND AS WELL AS THE BODY

Recently I read an article titled “Staying Sharp—Research Finds Exercise Can Beef Up The Mind As Well As The Body.” I was very intrigued by the statement and felt I would like to share some of the concepts presented in the article.

During the last few years researchers have learned that there is a tremendous correlation between exercise and the body, and between exercise and the mind. They discovered that new cells can grow in the brain’s olfactory (smell) region, as well as in the area responsible for learning and memory. “It has really shocked the scientific community,” said Hanriet Von Prague, a researcher with the Salk Institute in California. She was part of the team that discovered exercise could induce cell growth.

The article goes on to state “the finding adds to a growing list of exercise’s positive effects on the brain, from boosting beneficial hormones that can fight depression and stress to increasing oxygen supply. It suggests people, young and old, can benefit and its significance reaches beyond warding off minor memory problems with a morning jog.”

There are other studies, such as one at the University of Colorado, that show exercise boosts levels of a protein that nourishes brain cells. Along with that, it showed exercise also appears to counteract detrimental effects of poor diet and high stress-hormone levels in the brain.

According to Bonnie Fuller who teaches about physical exercise and maintaining a healthy brain, “Exercise is good because our brains use about 20 percent of our oxygen supply, and the only way to get that is from the blood. Anything that stimulates our circulatory system contributes to brain health. The more brain cells and pathways a person can stockpile throughout life, the better. Research is showing that it would take longer for an organic brain disease to destroy those pathways.”

The concluding comments in the article state that people are urged “to stay physically and mentally active in order to ward off memory problems...” Exercise can help prevent mild depression, which is one of the reasons for memory loss. It can help reduce the effects of stress, which contributes to forgetfulness. It is important to start young to develop these cells.

So the next time you cannot find the car keys or where you laid your “to do” list, try working out. Perhaps by doing so, you will find the lost item just where you last had it.

(Submitted by Larry Wickham)