

In one study, participants who walked 3 hours per week for 6 months improved brain reaction times and executive functions like planning, thinking and judgment. Not only does aerobic exercise provide more nutrients and oxygen to the brain, it also reduces blood pressure which is associated with cognitive impairment. On top of that, aerobic exercise spurs the body to produce growth factors which promote cell growth, differentiation and survival.

For aging adults, adopting a moderate-intensity walking routine may be a low-risk way to reduce the likelihood of developing vascular cognitive impairment. To make the walking even more effective, do it in pairs or groups since socializing is also good for brain health. Add to that a healthy diet, and there’s a very good chance your brain will continue to function normally well into your senior years. However, if you have any health concerns, consult a medical professional before taking up regular walking.

Regular aerobic exercise—like walking—is a proven way to increase cardiovascular health. But now there’s evidence that walking may also reduce symptoms of mild cognitive impairment, sometimes called vascular dementia. This type of dementia is caused by the same kind of blood vessel damage that’s found in heart disease. Such damage reduces blood flow to the brain so it doesn’t get all the nutrients and oxygen it needs.

Walk your way to a better brain.