

Wellness

Wednesday



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Want To Lower Your Dementia Risk? Get These 3 Factors Under Control

Dementia, a condition that affects a significant portion of the aging population, is a growing concern world-wide. According to a recent study, approximately 10% of adults over the age of 65 in the United States have dementia, with another 22% experiencing mild cognitive impairment. While certain factors contributing to dementia are beyond our control, there are lifestyle-related risk factors that we can address to mitigate the risk. In this article, we will explore three key factors that can help lower your dementia risk and provide practical steps to incorporate them into your daily life.

Risk Factor #1: Not Enough Exercise

Regular physical exercise has numerous benefits for both physical and mental health. It is no surprise that exercise plays a crucial role in lowering the risk of dementia. Dr. Alvaro Pascual-Leone, a neurology professor at Harvard Medical School, points out that obesity, hypertension, and diabetes contribute to up to 50% of dementia cases. By addressing these risk factors, we can significantly decrease the rate of dementia.

Physical exercise not only helps control these conditions but also promotes the formation of new brain cells. It enhances brain plasticity, which is essential for acquiring new skills and forming memories. If you haven't engaged in regular exercise, it's important to start gradually. Consult with your doctor or a physical therapist to develop a safe exercise plan.

Incorporate a combination of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, strength training with weights or resistance bands, and mind-body exercises like yoga or tai chi. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise per day, five days a week. Regular exercise will not only improve your physical well-being but also contribute to a sharper mind and a reduced risk of dementia.

Risk Factor #2: Not Enough Social Interaction

Loneliness and limited social engagement have been linked to higher dementia risk. Dr. Smita Patel, a physician and neuroscientist, emphasizes the importance of social interaction in maintaining brain health. Beyond protecting your brain, increased social interaction can also contribute to a longer life. In fact, research shows that having strong social relationships increases overall survival rates by 50%.



Interactions with family, friends, and neighbors play a significant role in shaping our identities and improving our brain function and overall health. Feeling lonely can be as detrimental to your health as other well-known risk factors like daily smoking or serious health conditions like diabetes.

Risk Factor #3: Not Enough Sleep

Sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining overall health, including brain health. Inadequate sleep, particularly sleeping less than five to six hours per night, has been associated with an increased risk of developing dementia later in life. Unfortunately, insomnia becomes more common as we age.

To improve your sleep patterns and reduce the risk of dementia, consider the following steps:

- Limit alcohol consumption, as it can disrupt sleep patterns.
- Avoid large meals and drinks two hours before bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom cool, ideally between 60 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Minimize exposure to phones, laptops, and TVs two hours before bed, as the blue light emitted by these devices can interfere with sleep.
- Use a white noise app or machine to create a soothing environment for sleep.
- Implementing these strategies can help optimize your sleep and decrease the risk of developing dementia later in life.

Final Thoughts

While dementia is a complex condition influenced by various factors, addressing lifestyle-related risk factors can significantly lower your risk. By prioritizing regular exercise, social interaction, and quality sleep, you can take proactive steps towards maintaining brain health and reducing the likelihood of developing dementia.

Remember, prevention is key when it comes to dementia. Start incorporating these habits into your daily routine today, and your future self will undoubtedly thank you. Take control of your brain health and enjoy a fulfilling and vibrant life as you age.



ALMOND CAKE



INGREDIENTS

3 large eggs, whites and yolks separated, at room temperature
2/3 cup sugar
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
Pinch of fine sea salt
2 cups almond flour or almond meal
1 cup mixed berries
Powdered sugar for dusting (optional)

Almond cake is a delightful dessert that has gained popularity for its gluten-free and dairy-free qualities. This easy-to-make cake is made with almond flour or almond meal, giving it a light and airy texture. This easy recipe has a simple ingredient list and various serving options.

Almond Meal vs. Almond Flour-What's the Difference?

Almond flour is made by finely grinding blanched almonds, while almond meal is made from almonds that still have their skins intact—almond meal is also ground, but slightly less finely. In some recipes, almond meal and almond flour are not interchangeable, but in this almond cake recipe, either option will work.

A HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE

Almond cake offers a healthier alternative to traditional cakes. Unlike many desserts that are packed with oil or butter, almond cake doesn't require any added fats. The natural fats present in almond flour provide moisture and richness to the cake, eliminating the need for additional oils or butters. This makes almond cake a lighter and lower-calorie option compared to other cakes.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 /12th, Calories: 179 kcal, Carbohydrates: 17 g, Protein: 7 g, Fat: 11 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 47 mg, Sodium: 39 mg, Fiber: 3 g, Sugar: 13 g



INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and prepare a 9-inch springform pan by greasing it with non-stick spray and lining it with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and all but 2 tablespoons of the sugar until the mixture becomes thick and pale in color.
3. Add the vanilla extract and salt to the egg yolk mixture and whisk again.
4. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites on medium speed until they become opaque and fluffy.
5. Sprinkle the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar over the egg whites and continue to beat until they hold medium peaks.
6. Stir a quarter of the beaten egg whites into the egg yolk mixture, then gently fold in the remaining egg whites and half of the almond flour.
7. When the mixture has only a few streaks of white left, fold in the rest of the almond flour.
8. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 35 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and springs back when touched.
9. Let the cake cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes, then remove the sides and bottom of the pan and peel away the parchment paper.
10. Dust the almond cake with powdered sugar and serve with fresh berries.

Adding Citrus Zest

For a twist of flavor, consider adding orange or lemon zest to the almond cake batter. The citrus zest will infuse the cake with a refreshing aroma and tangy taste.

No Springform Pan? No Problem!

If you don't have a springform pan, you can still make almond cake using a regular nine-inch round cake pan. Just make sure to prepare the pan by greasing it and lining it with parchment paper as instructed.

<https://www.self.com/gallery/lower-body-dumbbell-workout-butt-and-legs>

Featured Exercise ► Kickstand Deadlift



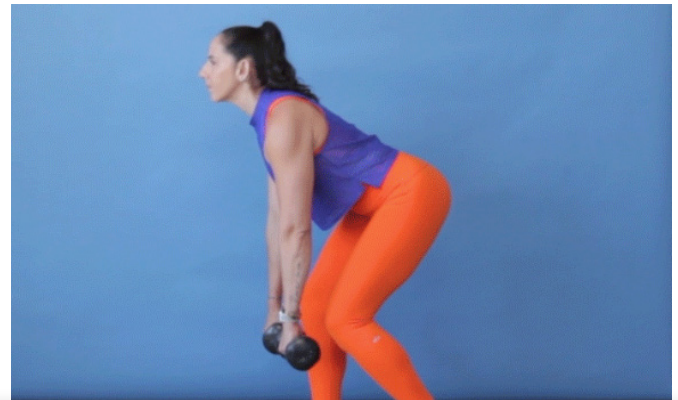
HOW TO DO IT:

- Start by grabbing a weight (such as a kettlebell or a pair of dumbbells) and stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- Step your right leg back, ensuring that the toes are at least in line with or slightly past the heel of the front leg. The heel of your back foot should be off the ground, with only the toes lightly touching the floor.
- Soften the knee of your left leg and shift all your body weight onto it.
- Hinge at the hips while maintaining a straight back. Throughout the movement, keep your left shin vertical.
- Once your hips are hinged back, drive them forward while exhaling and engage your abdominals to prevent hyperextension.
- Repeat the movement for the desired number of repetitions before switching sides.

THE BENEFITS:

Enhanced Muscle Activation: By targeting the hamstrings and gluteals, this exercise helps to strengthen and tone the posterior chain, improving overall lower body strength and stability.

Improved Balance and Stability: The Kickstand Romanian Deadlift provides a bridge between unilateral and bilateral training, allowing for increased stability and reduced balance challenges.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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