

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 472 Strategies for Better Brain Health – Part 1

How do we take care of the most important part of our body, our brain? I'm Jerry Roberts and today we'll look at easy things we can do to keep our brain in the best possible condition. It's next on The Extra Point.

Brain health is the most important part of an effective healthcare regimen, but the vast majority of people know little or nothing about it. Today, it's my hope we change that.

Let's be honest. Most of us don't think about the condition of our body until something goes wrong. We don't go to the dentist until we have a problem. It's the same for the doctor. The majority of people living under the American flag have become reactive when it comes to their health, not proactive.

From the WebMD site was this quote from Elise Caccappolo, PhD, an associate professor of neuropsychology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York: "Many people don't start thinking about their brain health until they notice some cognitive changes and memory loss in their 60s or 70s, but there are many things you can do, starting as young as childhood, to keep your brain as healthy as possible throughout your lifetime. We know that intellectual pursuits, social interaction, and perhaps most importantly, physical activity are helpful in keeping one's brain sharp." The site listed six specific areas to focus on.

1. Maintain a healthy heart. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and diabetes all increase the risk for developing neurodegenerative diseases by impeding blood flow to the brain. That can cause temporary or even permanent brain damage.

2. Quality sleep and lots of it. We've talked about it numerous times. Sleep is the number one thing we can do to reset the brain, allow it to heal, and to restore mental health. Commit to the same bedtime each night, turn off all

digital devices 30 minutes before you head for the pillow.

It's recommended that we get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Research shows that during sleep, the brain clears out toxins called beta-amyloids that can lead to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The more sleep we get, the better off we are.

Other strategies: write down on paper any lingering concerns for the next day. That will remind you and it signals the brain that it doesn't have to deal with those issues while you sleep. Another is that you pray or meditate for about 10 minutes before you climb into bed.

3. Eat well. Obviously, this is the main area where people go off in different directions. You have the standard local diet, Keto, Paleo, the Mediterranean, plant-based and more.

Experts who are well versed in brain health recommend a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, low in saturated fat, leafy green and cruciferous vegetables, whole grains, fruits, nuts, olive oil, and avocados. They also suggest controlling caffeine intake, particularly in the afternoon as it can get in the way of falling asleep. The site made reference to eliminating coffee by 2pm. However, if you want some additional caffeine, some say a good dark chocolate can help improve memory and cognitive function.

Tomorrow, three more ways to keep your brain healthy and operating properly for the long term.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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