

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1761 What a Neurologist Might Want You to Do

I am not a neurologist and I don't play one here on the Ray Gibson Show, but I've got some advice that neurologists have passed along through the pages of a well-known newspaper. This is meant for those of us with a few miles under our individual belts, but if you're on the younger side, you might want to listen and imagine possible changes you might want to make in your life. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next on The Extra Point.

The New York Times connected with a group of neurologists, and came away with some advice that we should consider.

The scientists interviewed believe that as many as 45 percent of dementia cases could be delayed or prevented with help from some simple, sometimes surprising changes in behavior. It's never too early or too late to start.

1. If you get on a bike of some kind that gets you on the street, wear protection. The folks quoted in the article suggested a helmet, and that's of ultimate importance.

I checked with the Guam Police Department, and they told me that if you ride a motorbike or human-powered bike, you need to wear a helmet. If you don't, you're not going to the slammer, but you might get a citation.

Every year, bikers fall and hit their head, and some suffer serious injury and even death. Here's the thing, I've known people who broke arms and legs, and left a patch of flesh on the road. I know some people think it's lame to have helmets and pads on, but probably not as lame as being covered in bandages if you don't.

2. Wearing ear plugs to protect from loud noises. Most of us take our hearing for granted. Scientists say older people with hearing loss are at a greater risk for dementia.

If you're around industrial noise, or you wore jacked up headphone while playing records on the radio for 20 years, this is a potential issue.

Today, people around the world use Bluetooth earphones, and walk around with them for hours every day. If you're blasting music in those, this might be something to think about.

3. Neurologists say to get your eyes checked. They believe vision loss is linked to cognitive decline. A 2023 study found that about a third of adults over 71 who had moderate to severe vision impairment also had dementia.

Scheduling regular eye exams could help to minimize that risk.

4. Move your body. Too many of us sit in a chair for hours. Researchers say we should get up every 20 minutes and walk around. If you can, swap out your chair for a stool.

One doctor who specializes in longevity says that sedentary folks — that's most of us — can do ourselves good by performing a set of 10 bodyweight squats every 45 minutes. She believes it reverses much of the damage of just sitting around.

5. Manage your cholesterol. I'll toss in the issue of insulin resistance, diabetes, and we could for hours on this topic alone. They are now tying this issue to dementia, Alzheimer's Disease and other chronic problems.

6. Look at the person next to you. Do they floss every day? They should. Besides the protection you'll get from tooth decay and gum disease, oral infections can spread to the sinuses, which can then trigger a clot or drainage problems in the brain — and there is a link between gum disease and dementia.

7. Protect your neck. It supplies blood to your brain, and an injury could restrict that blood flow and result in a clot, which could lead to a stroke.

8. We've talked about this one endlessly in our 7-plus years in this space...you need to improve your sleep. It is absolutely crucial for brain health. (Con't.)

For most of us, eight hours of restful and restorative sleep each night is a dream, if you'll pardon the reference. If you're getting four, work on five. If it's five, go for six. There is so much information online.

Even if you don't end up getting eight hours, you can certainly get more than you're getting now.

Most of what we know about the damage done through short and interrupted sleep has come in the last 10 years.

I can say with certainty that if I'd known in the 1990s what I know now, I likely would have made some different choices.

Here's your bottom line. If you would like to avoid having a steady stream of neurologists in your life, become proactive about your brain health.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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