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## Keep Your Brain Young

We hate to be the ones to tell you this: But just like the rest of your body, your brain is getting older. Unfortunately, mental decline can happen as we age and in the worst-case scenarios we may be hit with dementia or Alzheimer's disease—two of the most feared outcomes of getting old. But—here's the good news—mental decline is not a foregone conclusion, there are ways you can maintain sharp brain function. You can keep your brain young with these few easy tips.

**Improve your diet.** (Spoiler alert: Donuts, bad. Fruits and vegetables,

good.) The Harvard Medical School says "Good nutrition can help your mind as well as your body. For example, people that eat a Mediterranean style diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts, unsaturated oils (olive oil) and plant sources of proteins are less likely to develop cognitive impairment and dementia." Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH) advises that "a heart-healthy diet is also a brain-healthy diet. The GCBH found that a plant-based diet rich in green leafy vegetables and berries contributes to better brain health, while a diet high in red meat, saturated fats, sugar and salt can harm your brain health."

**Improve your cholesterol and blood pressure.** "With every beat, the heart pumps 20 to 25 percent of blood to the brain. That blood carries food and oxygen to brain cells to help them function normally. An unhealthy heart system can wreak havoc on your brain. High blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes all damage the arteries that carry oxygen to vital organs, including the brain," says Lawrence Appel, M.D., director of the Welch Center for Prevention at Johns Hopkins University. If you haven't done so already, get your blood pressure and your cholesterol checked. Your doctor's office is one place to get this done, but even the walk-in clinics in grocery stores can check your levels in just a few minutes at a nominal cost. As a bonus, lowering your cholesterol and blood pressure



Consider low-dose aspirin. Some studies have suggested that low-dose aspirin may reduce the risk of dementia.

will also benefit your heart. There are now many inexpensive medications to lower cholesterol and blood pressure but don't overlook lifestyle modification, as well. "Stay lean, exercise regularly, limit your alcohol to two drinks a day, reduce stress, and eat right," say the doctors at the Harvard Medical School.

**Consider low-dose aspirin.** Some studies have suggested that low-dose aspirin may reduce the risk of dementia, especially vascular dementia, but check with your doctor before starting any medication regimen.

**Exercise.** Building your muscles also helps build your mind. Exercise is believed to aid in the development of new nerve cells and increasing the connections between brain cells. This results in a more efficient and adaptive brain. And did we mention that exercise also lowers blood pressure and improves cholesterol levels?

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## Keep Your Brain Young



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**Exercise your brain, too.** Cognitive research has shown that challenging your mental abilities is one of the best ways to keep your brain limber. Although brain training software programs are all around us these days, there is no evidence to show that they result in any neurological benefits. Save your money and focus on some real world activities. John E. Morley, MD, director of St. Louis University's Division of Geriatric Medicine and author of *The Science of Staying Young* suggests:

1. "Test your recall. Make a list — of grocery items, things to do, or anything else that comes to mind — and memorize it. An hour or so later, see how many items you can recall.
2. Let the music play. Learn to play a musical instrument or join a choir.
3. Do math in your head. Figure out problems without the aid of pencil, paper, or computer.
4. Take a cooking class. Cooking uses a number of senses: smell, touch, sight, and taste, which all involve different parts of the brain.
5. Learn a foreign language.
6. Create word pictures. Visualize the spelling of a word in your head, then try and think of any other words that begin (or end) with the same two letters.
7. Draw a map from memory. After returning home from visiting a new place, try to draw a map of the area; repeat this exercise each time you visit a new location.

8. Challenge your taste buds. When eating, try to identify individual

- ingredients in your meal, including subtle herbs and spices.
9. Refine your hand-eye abilities. Take up a new hobby that involves fine-motor skills, such as knitting, drawing, painting, assembling a puzzle, etc.
  10. Learn a new sport."

**Be Social.** Perhaps the most rewarding and easy-to-accomplish activity to keep your brain young is to build and maintain your social ties. Regularly socializing with friends and family has been shown to lower the risk of dementia and lead to longer life expectancy.

### Free Videos Help You Unlock the Secrets of Social Security and VA Disability



Winning your rightfully earned benefits for Social Security and VA disability can be a complex and confusing process. But there is expert help for unlocking the secrets of these disability programs—the Cuddigan Law video library. Best of all it is FREE and available to everyone.

The library of 88 videos covers a full range of qualifying medical disorders, how-to tips on navigating the system and insider advice on winning your claim. You can access the video library at [cuddiganlaw.com/videos](http://cuddiganlaw.com/videos) or on our YouTube channel.



## Comfort Food

From the kitchen of Janet Cuddigan

Here's a fresh-as-spring recipe for a dip that has everything you enjoy on a baked potato. What's not to like about that?

### Baked Potato Dip

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (8 ounce) container sour cream
- 1 (1 ounce) package ranch dressing mix
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 2/3 (3 ounce) can real bacon bits

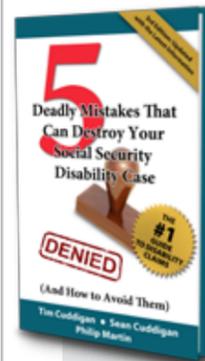
#### DIRECTIONS

Whisk together the cream cheese, sour cream, and ranch dressing mix in a large bowl until smooth.

Stir in green onions, Cheddar cheese, and bacon bits.

Cover and refrigerate overnight before serving.

Adapted from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com).



**"5 Deadly Mistakes That Can Destroy Your Social Security Disability Case" is the #1 guide to improving the odds of winning a disability case.**

For a FREE copy for you or someone you care about call Cuddigan Law at 402.933.5318 or email us at [lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com](mailto:lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com)

## Are Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security Disability on the Chopping Block?

As a candidate, Donald Trump repeatedly pledged that if elected there would be zero cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. That was then. Now his administration has released its 2019 budget proposal with \$1.7 trillion in cuts to these programs over the next ten years. It includes a \$266 billion hack to Medicare and slashing \$1.1 trillion from Medicaid. As for Social Security, they're after the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) again, putting on the table planned cuts of \$72 billion from a program that offers assistance the most vulnerable in our society—the disabled. The remainder of the cuts would come from a variety of assistance programs like food stamps, job training for seniors, and block grants for social programs at the local level.



In assessing what this budget proposal means, *Forbes* magazine said, "While most proposals in President Trump's newly released 2019 budget are unlikely to become law, the fiscal framework does show the White House's priorities for government over the coming year. And those apparently don't include support for older adults, younger people with disabilities, or their families."



### Sudoku Medium

For the puzzle solution go to [cuddiganlaw.com/library/newsletter](http://cuddiganlaw.com/library/newsletter)

Courtesy of [printable-puzzles.com](http://printable-puzzles.com) © 2018.

	3	6		7			1
		2	8	9			3
							7
		3	5		8		
2			3		9		8
							2
		8		1		2	4
4					7		1
	6			3	4		8

## We're in your corner.

We value the confidence and trust you have placed with us in the past.

If you or a family member or a friend could use our help now or in the future, please pass along our name.

Cuddigan Law.

Disability law is all we do.



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Are you a disabled veteran?

Before you apply for VA disability benefits call Cuddigan Law at 402.933.5318 or email us at [lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com](mailto:lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com) for your FREE copy of our book *The Essential Guide to VA Disability Claims*.

