

## Boost Your Grey Matter: Simple Steps to Growing Your Brain Power

The human brain is a three-pound marvel of more than 100 billion neurons—about the same number as stars in the Milky Way galaxy. These neurons have trillions of connections called synapses that communicate everything we think, see, and do. But for all the thinking we do with our brains every minute of every day, we seldom think about our brains and how we can improve our brain health and our ability to think.

In his new book *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age*, Dr. Sanjay Gupta says we can make our brains “better, faster, fitter, and sharper” and that it’s not that hard. Here, from Dr. Gupta and other experts, are three simple steps you can take to grow your brain power.

**1. Move it or lose it.** Exercise is not only good for your body, but it’s good for your brain, too. “Across the board, exercise increases brain function, memory retention, and other key areas of cognition up to 20 percent,” according to Dr. Arthur Kramer, a neuroscientist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as reported by *Life Experience* magazine.

Dr. Gupta, says “The connection between physical fitness and brain fitness is clear, direct, and powerful.” If you already exercise regularly, he says, try something different. For example, if you swim, try jogging or cycling.

**2. Feed your brain, but do it right.** Research has clearly shown that you can boost brain performance and stave off brain decline by eating certain foods and limiting others.

*Life Experience* magazine encourages people to eat good fats which “are premium gas for the brain. Any source of omega-3 fats, such as walnuts, flaxseeds, flaxseed oil, or dark, leafy greens, will help your brain run smoothly. But fish provide the brain with its favorite fat, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) – which accounts for roughly half of its overall fat content. A June 2006 study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* bears that out: People who ate an average of 2.7 servings of fish a week reduced their risk of suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and other



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dementias —illnesses that result in brain function decline in 4.5 million Americans—by roughly 50 percent.”

“Per gram of tissue, the brain produces more free radicals—highly reactive molecules that can contribute to cell damage, especially in the brain’s delicate fat tissue—than any other organ,” *Life Experience* magazine reports. “Some scientists suspect damage from free radicals is one of the biggest culprits in the memory loss associated with aging.

Luckily, antioxidants are the brain’s cleanup crew. Found primarily in fruits and vegetables, antioxidants work around the clock to scrub the body clean of free radicals. Numerous studies show that people who eat the most fruits and veggies throughout life are less likely to suffer from dementia later on.” And here’s some delicious news: other foods that are rich in antioxidants include dark chocolate, pecans, strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries.

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**Boost Your Grey Matter: Simple Steps to Growing Your Brain Power**

Boost Your Grey Matter...cont.

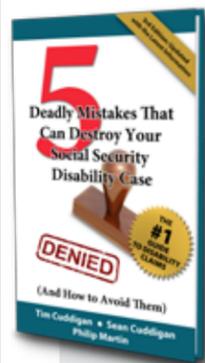
Because we often “mistake hunger for thirst”, Gupta recommends that between meals we drink a glass of water instead of reaching for a snack. Not only does the water fill you up and take the place of junk calories, it rehydrates your brain—an important component in boosting your brain power.

An easy way to keep good brain nutrition in mind is Dr. Gupta’s SHARP method:

- S:** Slash the sugar
- H:** Hydrate smartly
- A:** Add more omega-3s from natural sources
- R:** Reduce portions
- P:** Plan meals ahead

**Do your brain a favor and give it a break with time to rest and sleep.**

**3. You snooze, you win.** “Scores of well-designed studies ...routinely show that poor sleep can lead to impaired memory and that chronic stress can impair your ability to learn and adapt to new situations,” says Gupta. Do your brain a favor and give it a break with time to rest and sleep—at least seven hours of sleep every night, “the bare minimum if you want to have normal, healthy functioning physiology from your brain on down.”



**“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)**

**Question of the Month: Will I be awarded disability benefits because I have a particular illness or injury?**

Do you want to know the most important secret about winning Social Security disability benefits?

It is not enough to say you have a certain disease or type of injury even when the diagnosis is backed up your doctor and your medical records. Furthermore, it is also not enough to say or have your doctor say you are disabled. In the final analysis, the name of specific illness or injury or the term “disabled” don’t really mean much to the Social Security Administration. You have to prove that your medical condition (or combination of conditions) prevents you from holding onto a job. It is the limitations imposed by an illness or injury rather than the illness or injury itself that determines whether you will be awarded disability benefits.

Take for example a common injury—a herniated disc. Some people with this injury only have limited discomfort. For others, however, a herniated disc can mean excruciating pain and severe limitations on their ability to work.

Because no two cases are exactly alike, you should have your case evaluated by an expert who specifically focuses on Social Security disability law. You can call Cuddigan Law at 933-5318 for a free assessment of your situation.



**Comfort Food**

From the kitchen of Janet Cuddigan

We still have some cold winter days ahead of us. Here is a recipe for a delicious, hearty soup to beat the cold and as the name says it’s quick and easy to make.

**Quick and Easy Potato Soup**

- 2 tablespoons butter
- ¾ cup finely chopped onion
- 2 cups peeled and diced potatoes
- 1 ½ cups water
- ½ teaspoon dried dill weed (Optional)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 ¾ cups milk
- 3 tablespoons real bacon bits
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley, or to taste

Melt butter in saucepan over medium heat; cook and stir onion until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add potatoes, water, dill weed, salt, and pepper to onion; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are tender and water is almost all evaporated, at least 30 minutes. Stir milk and bacon bits into potato mixture; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir parsley into soup.

Adapted from allrecipes.com

**Cuddigan Law Launches Online VA Disability Calculator**

If you’re applying for veterans’ disability benefits, you’re probably wondering how much you can expect to receive each month after your application has been approved. The way the VA calculates disability percentages can be a bit confusing especially when you are suffering from multiple service connected disabilities. (For more on how the VA calculates benefits for multiple service connected disabilities visit our YouTube Channel and search for “What is VA Math?”)

Just as multiple impairments can increase your benefit amount, so, too, can your marital status and number of dependents. Estimating benefits can get complicated. That is why we are providing the VA Disability Calculator on our website to make it easier to get an estimate of your benefit amount. To access this free calculator go to [cuddiganlaw.com](http://cuddiganlaw.com) then click on the text “VA Disability Calculator” in the top right of the home page.



While this tool will provide a general estimate of how disability ratings will be calculated, there are many other factors that could potentially affect your case. To get a more accurate assessment of your potential total disability rating and monthly benefit amount, contact Cuddigan Law today to speak with an intake specialist for a free evaluation of your specific case.



**Word Search**

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

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Disability law is all we do.



Sean & Tim Cuddigan

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about Social Security and VA disability. You will find a full range of information about qualifying medical disorders, how-to tips on navigating the system, and insider advice on winning your claim.



**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*.**