

## Improving Concentration and Preventing Cognitive Decline

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We all want to perform at our best. However, there is limited evidence on interventions that improve concentration and prevent cognitive decline. Here is a summary of things you can try that may help.

1. Caffeine: studies show that caffeine intake can improve testing ability/concentration. 1-3 cups coffee is safe for this usage.

2. Yoga, aerobic exercise: studies show kids with ADHD need less medication with yoga/ aerobic exercise.

3. Rosemary, mint, or Lemon oil aromatherapy may help focus/concentration.



4. Obvious: remove distractions. Turn off electronic devices. If worried about a certain thing, meditate/ pray or write down a list of worried items and have dedicated time to plan/think about them. Then stop worrying!

5. Get plenty of rest at night. We all need 8 hours of sleep (or more!). Eat healthy (less white carbs/less full to prevent post lunch sleepiness)

6. For children, there are some observational studies that show that children who learn a second language can focus more and do better in school.

### Preventing Cognitive Decline

1) Keep learning new things/skills/recipes/piano songs, start a new home improvement/craft project.

2) Eat healthy: studies have shown berries have slowed cognitive decline in nurses in an observational study. People with Diets high in vegetables/fruits/nuts/healthy oils, that emphasize fish/poultry over red meat generally show less dementia. One randomized trial shows that this “mediterranean diet” lowers stroke, which may explain the lower risk of cognitive decline.

3) Control your Diabetes, high Blood pressure

4) There are many studies on Omega 3, Vit D, B vitamins, Soy, Vit E/C, and beta carotene on preventing of cognitive decline. If you just study the people who do take vitamins vs those who don't, there is an observation that they have less dementia. When people are randomly grouped to take the vitamins and not take them, these vitamins/supplements did not help to prevent dementia. It may be that people who are into taking vitamins may be just better off in the health/cognitive function to start with. However, if you want to try omega 3, vit D, B vitamins etc, please take safe amounts and see if it helps you. If you have questions please see me.