

## Mind and Body

“If I only had a brain” was a line in a popular movie. Name the movie and character. Bonus points if you know the year the film was released and actor.

What you just read is mental stimulation for your brain. Your brain allows you to interact with the world, understand, analyze and respond to various surroundings. A healthy brain is crucial to survival, growth and everyday success. But your brain needs exercise and maintenance to optimize and protect its current and future health. Your brain needs socialization, mental stimulation, physical activity, nutrition and sleep.

An outcome of the pandemic is increased opportunities for online interaction and classes. Trivia nights, language courses and book clubs are a few opportunities that residents can access through local public libraries. My colleagues created the Dining with Diabetes Online course so learners could access and view content at their convenience while still interacting with an instructor.

Regardless of virtual or in-person, socializing helps you to stay mentally fit. Engaging with someone provides opportunities for communication, critical thinking, creativity and emotional expression. People who isolate or segregate themselves are at greater risk of developing depression and dementia.

Physical activity, especially activities that gets your heart pumping, is especially helpful for your brain. Your heart pumps blood rich with oxygen and nutrients to your brain. The more fit your heart, the more effectively your brain can be fed with what it needs to stay sharp.

Nutrition matters. Choose foods that are high in antioxidants (fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts). Cut calories by reducing food high in fat and selecting low sodium options. Try adding foods with Omega-3 to your diet.

Get in good sleep habits so you can recharge your brain. If you're consistently having trouble sleeping, consult your health care provider.

K-State Research and Extension has programs to help with mind and body. Dining with Diabetes is a 4-week course that helps participants make changes in nutrition and physical activity to improve their health.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is a strength training course for older adults. The 8 week course helps participants gain confidence and strength with 8 basic exercises that work all major muscle groups. Waiting lists are now being formed for classes. Contact the office at 221-5450 for registration information. The answers to the opening questions: Wizard of Oz, Scarecrow, 1939, Ray Bolger.

*Sources: Erin Yelland, et al. Keys to Embracing Aging: Brain Activity*

### ***Upcoming K-State Research and Extension Events***

*K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Call 620-221-5450 for disability accommodations and scholarship requests.*

**Dining with Diabetes** - Thursdays, February 3, 10, 17 & 24, Winfield Early Learning Center Cafeteria, 509 E Eighth Avenue, Winfield, 5:15-7:15 p.m., \$25 for 4 sessions, Call 620-221-5450 to register.

**Stay Strong, Stay Healthy** - Arkansas City class with Golden Tigers \$20, Sixteen sessions, Mondays and Wednesdays, beginning February 2, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., 620-441-5225, pre-registration required.

Winfield Stay Strong, Stay Healthy class details to be finalized soon, call 620-221-5450 for waiting list.

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in  
Manhattan.

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