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NOOTROPICS AND BRAIN HEALTH

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Diana Walker

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NOOTROPICS – WHAT ARE THEY?

Have you ever heard of Nootropics?

Nootropics are very popular amongst people worldwide.

They are being used by millions to enhance mental performance in healthy people.

The name, Nootropics, consists of a class of chemicals, whether they are natural ones or man-made ones, yielding cognitive benefits to our Brains, and which all fall under the umbrella name of Nootropics, called by this name by Dr. Corneliu E. Giurgea, psychologist and chemist.

He was the one, in 1964, who synthesized the Nootropic called Piracetam. This was a compound which he discovered, shown to improve and boost the memory, to boost learning and creativity as well as verbal fluency and brain circulation. Eight years later, in 1972, he first coined the word “Nootropic”.

These Nootropic substances, in order to be called Nootropics, need to comply with a few requirements which are:

- ◇ They must enhance the ability to learn and to aid the memory.
- ◇ They must help the brain to function under conditions which are disruptive such as in electroconvulsive shock or hypoxia (low supply of oxygen).
- ◇ They need to protect the brain from physical and chemical assault, such as what comes from barbiturates and anticholinergic drugs.
- ◇ They must increase the efficiency of Neuron Firing Control Mechanism in both the sub-cortical and cortical regions of the brain.
- ◇ They must not possess a lot of side effects, needing to be almost non-toxic.

Nootropics have really gained in popularity today because we are living in such a stressful and fast-paced society.

This means if you can live a more Vibrant Life with Excellent Brain Health because of your excellent memory, your focusing skills, your intelligence, and creativity as well as motivation, then you probably want to learn more about the wonders of Nootropics and might be taking them already.

BENEFITS OF TAKING NOOTROPICS

- ✓ Memory is improved whether short-term, long-term and for learning.
- ✓ Focus – attention span is improved, mental performance and acuity.
- ✓ Energy is improved.
- ✓ Mood and motivation to work productively is enhanced and improved.
- ✓ Cognition is improved as antioxidant damage is reduced and neurotoxins are removed.

NOOTROPICS AND BRAIN HEALTH - ONES THAT I DON'T NECESSARILY RECOMMEND!

We are going to discuss some of the top Nootropics. Most of this section talks about Nootropics that can be habit-forming, or have side effects, or have to be prescribed (drugs/synthetics). My other section below deals with Herbal Nootropics.

Caffeine

- Caffeine is probably the most widely used psychoactive product in the world. Yes, you probably have your portion of caffeine every morning as you rush out the door on your way to your daily activities, but caffeine is to be found in many other substances like tea, cocoa, kola nuts, and guarana too.
- Caffeine is added to most energy drinks, sodas and plenty of medications too.
- How it works is that it blocks the adenosine receptors of your brain, helping you to not feel so tired anymore. If you consume quite a low to moderate bit of caffeine, say no more than around 40–300 mg, you can actually increase your attention and alertness. The above doses are good for people who are generally fatigued.
- Caffeine is undoubtedly the most widely used nootropic. While most people don't think of their daily cup of coffee as a nootropic, they would probably admit that they're often looking to improve their focus or boost their energy with that cup of coffee. So, in a sense, they are using caffeine as a nootropic.

Diana Walker's Note:

I was able to get off 8 cups of coffee a day by drinking Sunrider Calli Tea. See my video here (15,000 views, 15 years ago when I put this up on YouTube) <https://youtu.be/2BMk6ibJEek?si=3BgzCIN5RWNxgwqn>

L-Theanine

- You might have heard also of this important amino acid, although there are plenty of amino acids; in fact, there are around 20 of them.
- You will find L-Theanine naturally in tea, and also as a supplement from your local health shop.
- A few studies completed on L-Theanine show that just taking around 200 mg will have a calming effect on you, without causing you any drowsiness and if you just take around 50 mg; that's about 2 cups of tea – you can increase your alpha-waves in your brain. This is the part of the brain linked to creativity.
- This amino acid becomes even more effective when you take it with caffeine, as mentioned above. So you can imagine that the two are often used together to enhance performance and you will find them in supplements as well.

Creatine

- Creatine is another amino acid. This is the one that the body will use to make protein.
- Many people take creatine because it is a very popular bodybuilding supplement, promoting muscle growth and at the same time enhancing your brain. When you consume creatine, it will enter your brain. There it binds with phosphate and creates a molecule which your brain will use to feed or fuel its cells. A lot more energy is available for your brain cells which means your reasoning skills and short-term memory are going to get a real boost, which is particularly beneficial for vegetarians and people who are highly stressed.
- From studies, it is found that it is quite safe for people to take in around 5 grams of creatine each day without experiencing any negative effects. However, if you do take in larger doses which can be effective as well, there is no research yet on the long-term safety.

Bacopa Monnieri

- Ever heard of this one – Bacopa monnieri? It's an ancient herb, used in Ayurveda medicine and capable of enhancing your brain function.
- There have been studies completed on Bacopa Monnieri and which show that if you take supplements, you will be able to speed up the processing of information that your brain needs to deal with. What you get are faster reaction times to problem-solving and a better memory.
- This ancient herb contains chemical compounds called bacosides, which are known to protect your brain from oxidative stress.
- When you take Bacopa monnieri, you don't immediately feel the effects and therefore you need to take doses of around 300–600 mg for a few months to get the real benefits.

Nicotine

- This natural chemical, nicotine, is found, mainly from the tobacco plant. It's a compound in cigarettes that has made cigarette smoking so addictive.
- There are nicotine gums and nicotine patches to put on your skin. But studies show that nicotine improves alertness and attention span, and even improves

motor function. Some people claim that when you chew the nicotine gum, your handwriting fluidity and speed improves.

- Caution is given though on taking nicotine, as it can become addictive and can also be lethal when taken in high doses.

Noopept (Synthetic Drug)

- This is a synthetic smart drug which you can buy as a supplement.
- When you take Noopept, it is unlike some of the natural nootropics, where the effects take longer to be noticed – with Noopept the effects are able to be felt within minutes of taking it, and these effects can even last several hours.
- Studies completed shows how Noopept helps people who have had brain injuries to recover faster, but more studies are needed to be undertaken to understand it more.

Piracetam (Synthetic Drug)

- Another synthetic nootropic is Piracetam – this one is very similar to that of Noopept in its function and structure.
- When you take Piracetam, you will improve your memory. It is particularly excellent for older people who typically show signs of age-related mental decline.
- It has not been shown yet to show much benefit in healthy adults though.
- In the 1970s, a few studies suggested that piracetam can improve memory function in healthy adults, but these fairly insignificant studies have not yet been re-studied or confirmed.
- Piracetam is available on the market but there is not much research completed on its effects as yet.

Phenotropil (Synthetic Drug)

- Phenotropil. It is also known as phenylpiracetam, another synthetic smart drug, a widely available over-the-counter supplement.
- It is similar to Piracetam and Noopept as well, helping the brain when it has suffered an injury such as trauma, stroke, and epilepsy.
- A study done on rats concluded that phenotropil has the ability to slightly enhance the memory, but research to support this in healthy adults is not available.

Modafinil (Provigil) (Synthetic Drug)

- This drug is commonly sold under the brand name of Provigil.
- It's a prescription drug used to treat uncontrollable drowsiness. Therefore it does reduce feelings of tiredness and is able to improve memory in adults that are sleep-deprived.
- When you are on this drug, you feel more on top of your time management and able to accomplish your goals more easily.
- You need to use this drug in a responsible manner, so as to not encounter any negative side effects.

- It is sold as a drug that is non-addictive, but there have been instances where people have become dependent on it with withdrawal symptoms experienced. Use with care.

Amphetamines (Adderall) (Synthetic Drug)

- This drug is also a prescription medication that has some very stimulating amphetamines in it.
- If you suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD you might know about this drug. Today, it is often taken by healthy adults who want to improve their focus and attention spans.
- Because there are amphetamines in this drug, people note feeling much more alert and awake, even attentive and optimistic with reduced appetite.
- From studies, it was found that it helps people more to control their behavior. Their short-term memory is also enhanced.
- However, remember that with many of these drugs, they often come with side effects, and on many college campuses, it has been found that Adderall has been widely abused. Some surveys indicate that some 43% of students use these stimulant type drugs without a prescription. So look out for side effects from using Adderall which can include anxiety, sweating and lowered sex drive. Even though there is evidence that this drug does enhance mental performance, it is best to use it as prescribed.

Methylphenidate (Ritalin) (Synthetic Drug)

- Most of us have heard of Ritalin because we know of children who are on Ritalin; touted to help with ADHD and narcolepsy. But like Adderall, it increases the dopamine and noradrenaline concentrations in your brain because it is a stimulant. But Ritalin does not contain amphetamines as Adderall does.
- For healthy adults, Ritalin improves information processing speed, short-term memory, and attention. The thing is, if it is taken in excess it will work in exactly the opposite way and impair your thinking. In the same way that Adderall is abused, so is Ritalin, especially in the age groups of 18–25.
- Side effects can be stomachache, insomnia, loss of appetite, and headaches. Worse side effects can include psychosis, seizures, hallucinations, heart arrhythmias, and high blood pressure – this is when you take it in high doses.
- Remember it is a powerful stimulant, to be used only as prescribed.

MENTAL FATIGUE AND BRAIN FOG

Are you living in a state of continual mental fatigue and brain fog?

Between your work, your home life and your social life, your schedule and plate feels so hectic; too full – and sometimes you feel like your brain is busy burning out.

Nootropic supplements have the ability to increase brain function and overall focus.

SYNTHETIC INGREDIENTS

CAUTION!!! - there are many synthetic ingredients in most of the Nootropics listed above. Synthetic ingredients can wear out the adrenal glands.

(PERSONAL NOTE FROM DIANA WALKER ~ I have been using wonderful Brain-Boosting Sunrider herbal nutrition for Vibrant Health since 1996. I'm in my late 70s now and feel Amazing.) Join me on this wonderful health journey here:

https://www.diana2.com/healthy_life_style.html

NOOTROPICS AND BRAIN HEALTH - HERBAL FOOD-GRADE NOOTROPICS THAT I WOULD RECOMMEND

A much better choice for people would be to use NATURAL brain boosters and adaptogens. Look at some of these Natural Brain Boosters and Adaptogens:

Rhodiola Rosea

- Rhodiola Rosea is an adaptogenic herb. Adaptogens are herbs that help to restore, balance and protect your body.
- By taking rhodiola rosea, you are helping your body to handle the stresses of life more effectively, that gets flung your way.
- When you take a supplement, you improve your mood and you also decrease that anxious state that sometimes comes about when you are experiencing burnout. For those who are highly stressed, rhodiola rosea help to reduce mental fatigue.
- College students find this herb particularly beneficial when they are writing exams because it helps them cope with the stress.
- Further research is required to determine what the optimal doses should be.

Panax Ginseng (Korean Ginseng)

- This is another ancient medicinal plant that increases brain function.
- When you take a single dose which is about 200–400 mg of Panax ginseng, you reduce brain fatigue and find that you can handle difficult mental tasks, such as working with high mathematical problems, etc.
- Research doesn't show yet just how Panax ginseng is able to boost brain function as yet and it could well be due to its strong anti-inflammatory properties and effects; properties which help in protecting the brain from oxidative stress.

Oxidative stress is when our cells get “rusty” when we breathe due to oxidative stress – caused by free radicals, which are unstable molecules that damage or oxidize cells throughout our body. To put it bluntly, free radicals can have serious consequences to our health because they contribute to disease.

- There are other studies which show that the body might get too used to taking in ginseng and therefore its positive effects become less after using it for a few months. More research is obviously required to find out just what the long-term effects are. **NOTE: Sunrider Herbs always have positive effects!!! Even if you use them for almost 30 years, almost daily, like I have! Dr. Tei Fu Chen, Founder of Sunrider and Master Herbalist, emphasizes that he has created his formulas in a very unique way, that cannot be replicated. Learn more in my newsletters. You are welcome to email me at diana@dianawalker.com if you have any questions. Korean Ginseng is in several Sunrider formulas.**

Ginkgo Biloba

- This must surely be one of the most used herbs around, particularly in Germany and France, and one of the best-researched herbs.
- This old tree has been around since ancient days. Today it is still going strong because it obviously works!
- Extracts of the leaves are used which have a positive effect on the brain. If you take it for 6 weeks or so, it is said that you will start noticing the beneficial effects of Ginkgo Biloba. This herb can help improve blood flow to the brain, improve memory, improve focus and more.
- It is known to decrease the levels of cortisol which is a stress hormone of the body.
- Not all studies, however, show the beneficial effects of this old tree, and more research continues to be carried out to better understand just how effective this tree is on mental health and brain function.

Lion’s Mane Mushroom

In Chinese medicine, you will find lions mane mushroom which is amazing to use and it is recommended you use it for about 3-months to a year, even longer.

Cannabidiol Oil or CBD

This oil comes from the hemp plant and has been shown from clinical studies to support the brain as well as the nervous system. People have much emotional stress today and it helps to lower stress and support the parasympathetic nervous system – responsible for hormone balance and digestive health.

Rosemary Essential Oil

Whether you use it in a diffuser, apply it topically or use it in cooking, rosemary oil is a wonderful natural herb for the brain and nervous system.

Omega 3 Fish Oil

Omega-3 fats are a must-have when it comes to cognitive function. They play a very important role in the cell membranes of neurons. Deficiencies in omega-3 in both humans and animals have been shown to be correlated with increased mental health problems and even worse, a higher risk of suicide.

ADRENAL GLANDS

The adrenal glands could be described as your body's battery, and when it is flat, like your car, it needs to be recharged and maintained as well. So much energy is used up and when that happens, if the 'battery' is not being recharged, it gets drained, and eventually falls flat.

In traditional Chinese medicine, there are wonderful and natural remedies to help.

Diana's NOTE: I have benefited from Sunrider Chinese Herbs for nearly 30 years. Fortunately the combinations of herbs and formulas that Dr. Tei Fu Chen provides, can be eaten daily and are safe and "Food Grade Herbs". Sunrider plant-based herbal nutrition is based on Ancient Chinese Formulas: [https://www.diana2.com/A to Z Sunrider Products.html](https://www.diana2.com/A_to_Z_Sunrider_Products.html)

RELAX!

The top remedy is to stop working so hard if it is causing you so much stress. You need to take some time off to unplug. If you really want to be healthy, you need to get some downtime – walks in nature, no cell phone activity, getting into a good story, having lunch with a best friend and doing stuff that takes you away from the daily grind and all of its stresses.

SLEEP!

A really simple way you can recharge your adrenals is to get a good night's sleep.

HERBAL FORMULAS!

Supplementing your diet with certain herbal adaptogens will also do the trick.

Licorice Root Extract, Ginseng, and the B vitamins all support adrenal health. – remember to check in with your healthcare provider before you make changes in your diet or your fitness regime.

NOOTROPICS AREN'T REALLY A NEW IDEA

Nootropics aren't really a new idea because humans have always been gravitating towards chemicals and foods that help them feel sharp, quick, happy and content.

Our brains are using only about 20% of our energy when at rest, says National Geographic, and therefore our thinking ability is greatly affected by what we eat and the number of calories and nutrients we take in.

Nootropics can play an important role in keeping our brains running effectively. The long-term effects of our basic lifestyle practices cannot be ignored. For good brain health, we need to keep our brains active – to use them and not lose them. Exercise your brain with the right activities, get plenty of physical exercises, eat a healthy whole-food (close to nature) diet, not overeating, and remembering to get good quality sleep are activities, which if you comply with them, your brain can be working effectively for you for the rest of your days! It's that simple, really.

Thank you so much for trusting me to provide valuable health education, free ebooks, and the chance to win valuable Healthy Gift prizes in my contests.

I have been passionate about health and nutrition for over 50 years. I was trained as a Naturopath in the 1980s. *NOTE: I'm not a practicing Naturopath, but my passion and education on Holistic Health have been with me for over 50 years!*

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and

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