

# Cognitive Health in PD: – *Enabling Veterans to Fight Back*



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**JOHN DUDA, MD**

**NATIONAL VA PD VIRTUAL  
CONSORTIUM MEETING**

**JANUARY 2021**

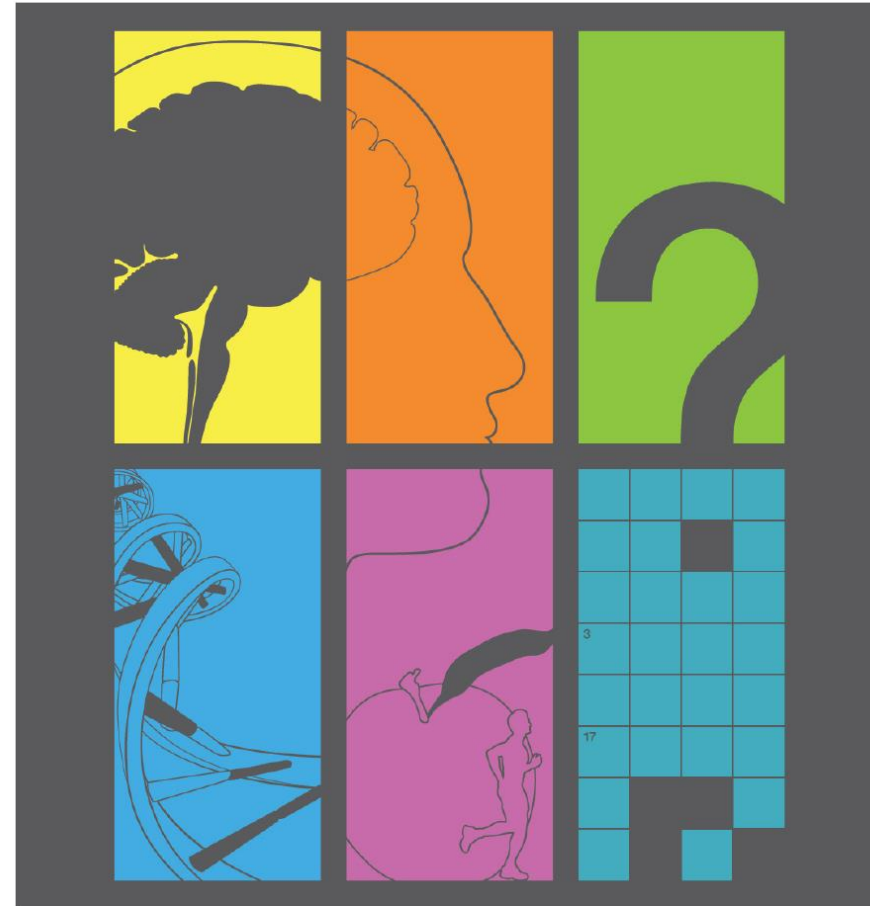
# Presentation Components



- **Introduction to how to think about preventing dementia – Joe Quinn**
- How to get your Veterans exercising – Jim Morley
- Introduction to a comprehensive approach to educating Veterans about modifying their lifestyle to improve brain health – John Duda

# April 2010: NIH Consensus Conference on dementia prevention

## NIH Consensus Development Conference Statement on Preventing Alzheimer's Disease and Cognitive Decline

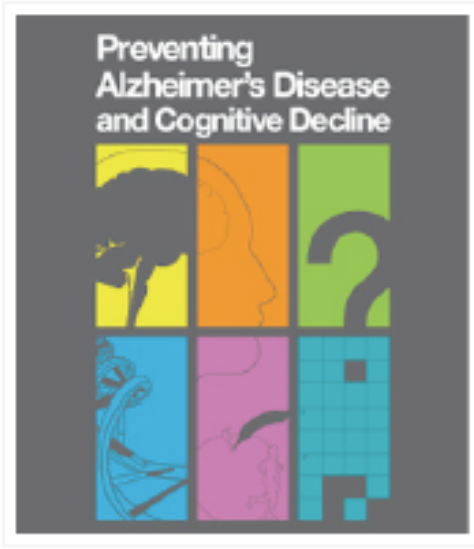


**NIH Consensus and State-of-the-Science Statements**

Volume 27, Number 4  
April 26–28, 2010

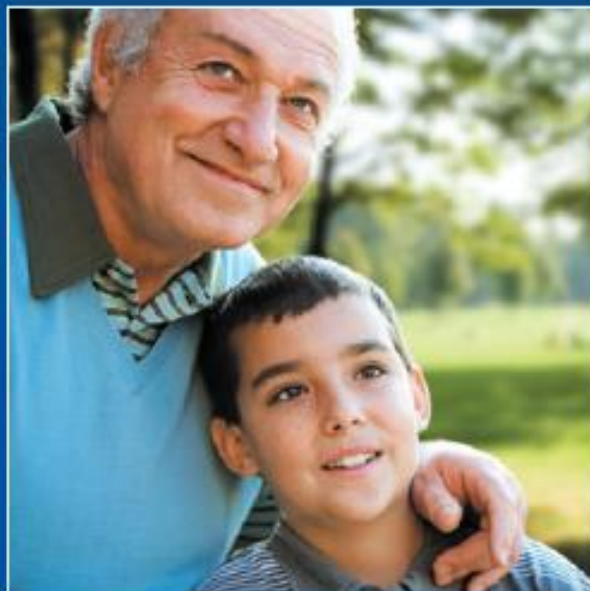
# April 2010: NIH Panel concludes nothing works

## Preventing Alzheimer's Disease and Cognitive Decline – NIH State-of-the-Science Conference



Many preventive measures for cognitive decline and for preventing Alzheimer's disease—mental stimulation, exercise, and a variety of dietary supplements—have been studied over the years. However, an independent panel convened this week by the National Institutes of Health determined that the value of these strategies for delaying the onset and/or reducing the severity of decline or disease hasn't been demonstrated in rigorous studies.

“...Evidence is insufficient to support the use of pharmaceutical agents or dietary supplements to prevent cognitive decline or Alzheimer's disease...”



# *The Healthy Brain Initiative*

**The Public Health Road Map for State  
and National Partnerships, 2013–2018**

alzheimer's   
association



# Heart health = brain health

“All the things that we know  
are bad for your heart turn  
out to be bad for your brain.”

Marilyn S. Albert, PhD  
*Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions*



# The projected effect of risk factor reduction on Alzheimer's disease prevalence

Lancet Neurol 2011; 10: 819-28

Deborah E Barnes, Kristine Yaffe

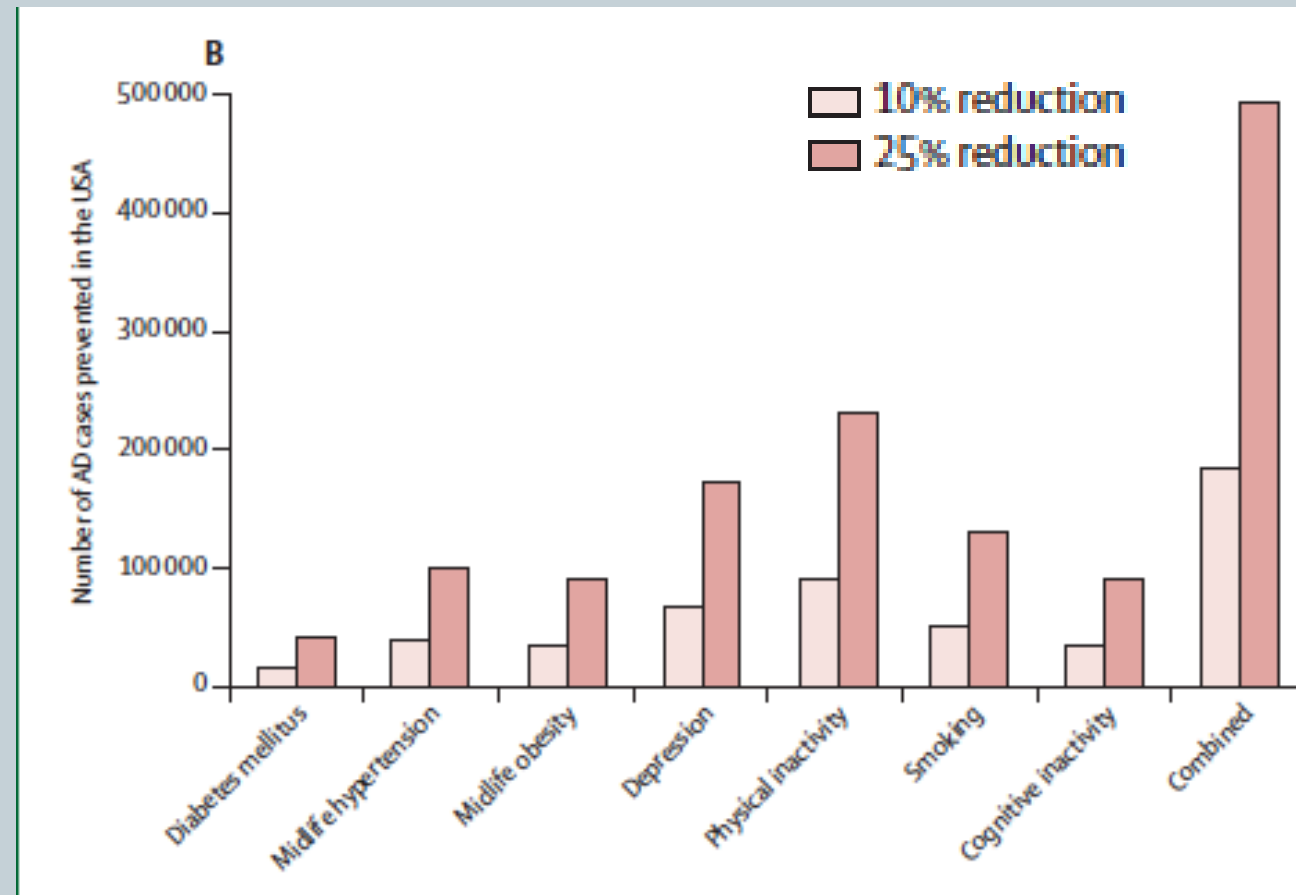


Figure: Potential number of AD cases that could be prevented through risk factor reduction

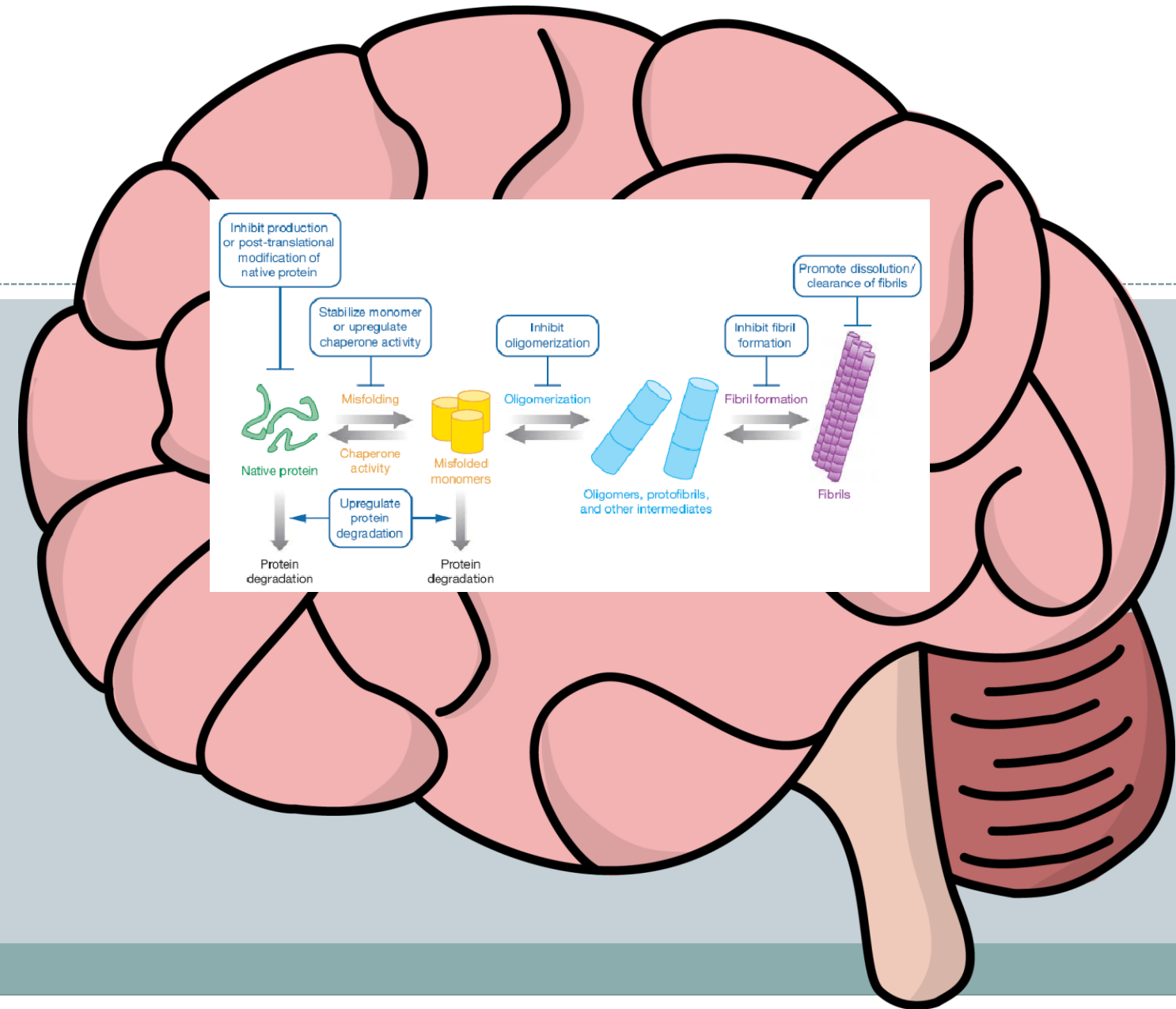
# Ten-point plan for preventing cognitive decline:



<b>factor</b>	<b>target</b>	<b>source</b>
smoking	No smoking	American Stroke Assn
Blood pressure	<120/80	“
Fasting glucose	<100	“
cholesterol	<200	“
diet	4/5 AHA guidelines	“
BMI	<25	“
Aerobic exercise	150 minutes per week	“
Depression	Beck, Hamilton, or M-A	AAN Guidelines (2011)
Sleep apnea	Low risk on STOP-BANG	AASM
medications	Avoid anticholinergics	Beers list



# “central dogma” of neurodegeneration:



# the brain "milieu":

Vascular health

Psychosocial stress

Neurotransmission

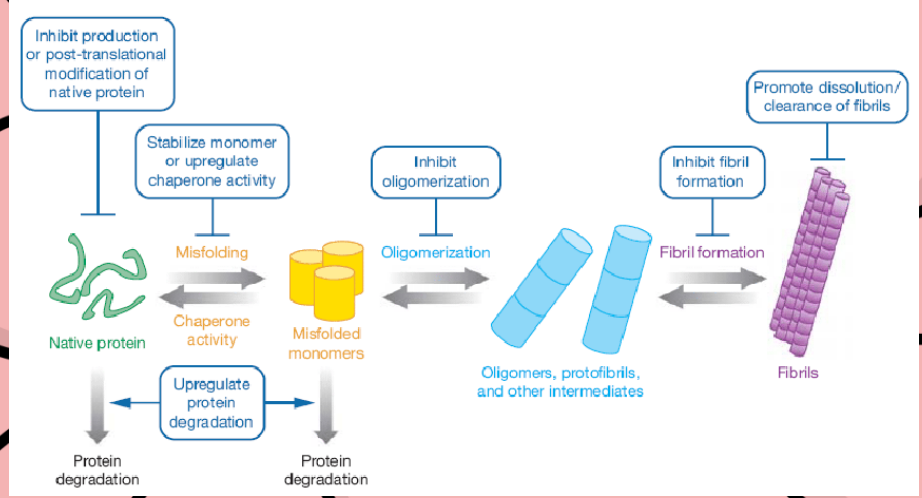
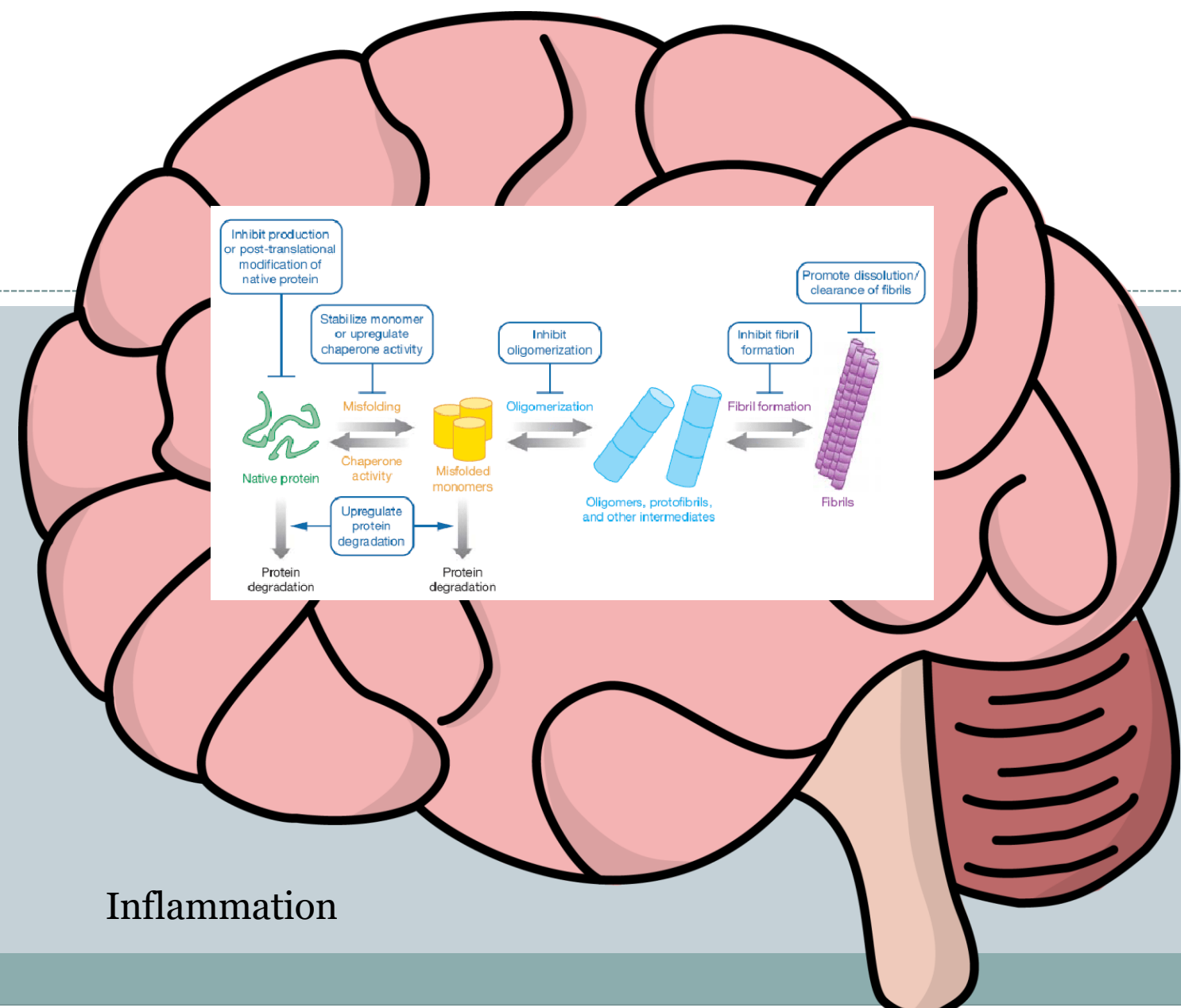
Hormonal status

Environmental Toxins (eg, etoh, Anesthesia)

Nutrition

Sleep

Inflammation



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# Exercise is (brain) medicine



- Myriad general health benefits
- Epi and clinical trial evidence:
  - Fitness (VO<sub>2</sub>)  $\alpha$  cognitive scores in seniors
  - Mid-life exercise and the risk of MCI or dementia
  - Increases in functional connectivity (fMRI)
- Animal models link exercise with:
  - Growth factors (IGF-1, BDNF)
  - Markers of synaptic plasticity
  - neurogenesis



# Effects of physical exercise programs on cognitive function in Parkinson's disease patients: A systematic review of randomized controlled trials of the last 10 years

Franciele Cascaes da Silva<sup>1\*</sup>, Rodrigo da Rosa Iop<sup>1</sup>, Laiana Cândido de Oliveira<sup>1</sup>, Alice Mathea Boll<sup>1</sup>, José Gustavo Souza de Alvarenga<sup>2</sup>, Paulo José Barbosa Gutierrez Filho<sup>2</sup>, Lídia Mara Aguiar Bezerra de Melo<sup>2</sup>, André Junqueira Xavier<sup>3</sup>, Rudney da Silva<sup>1</sup>

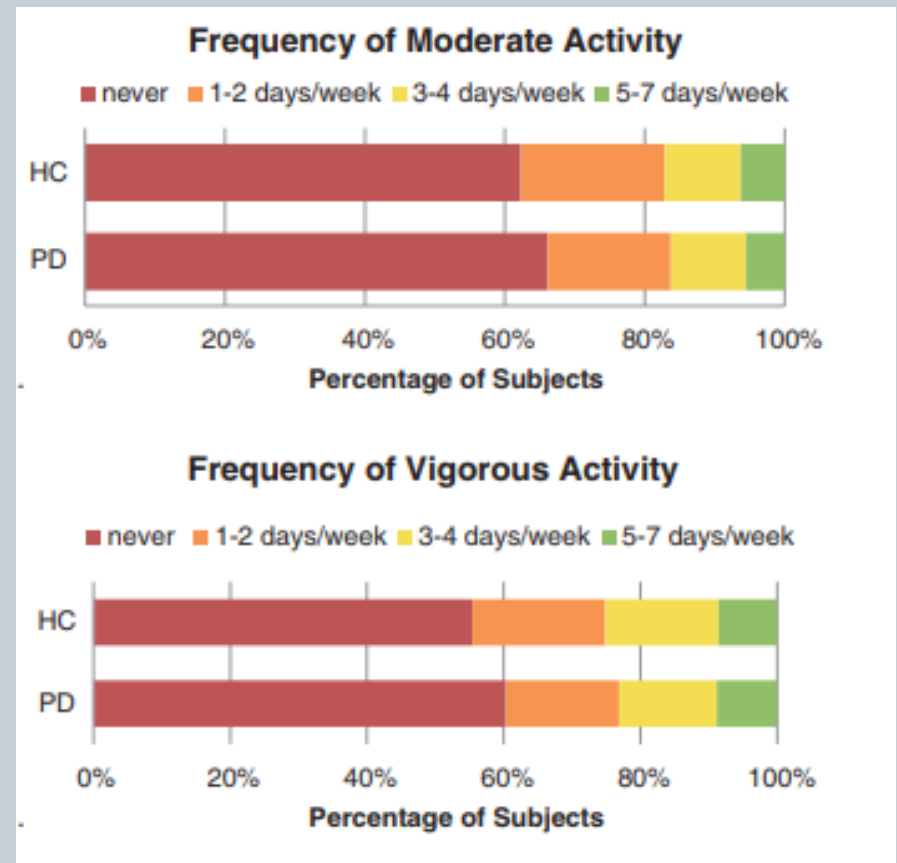
- 9 RCTs, N=256, moderate disease, mean ages 59-71, durations 4-11 years
  - Treadmill, dance, Tai Chi, WiiFit, cognitive motor training, PT.
    - ✦ 2-3x/week. 40-90 min sessions
  - Followup 2-3 months
  - MMSE most common outcome
- Significant effects overall, largest effect size with treadmill training
- Limited by heterogeneity of interventions and outcomes

# Physical Activity in Early Parkinson Disease



Sneha Mantri<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Michelle E. Fullard<sup>a,b</sup>, John E. Duda<sup>a,b</sup> and James F. Morley<sup>a,b</sup>

- 383 PD & 175HC from PPMI
- Self-reported activity (PASE)
- Compliance similar
  - ~40%--c/w gen pop
- Good news, bad news
  - Early PD no *worse* than HC
  - Opportunity for intervention
  - Is PPMI representative?





## Understanding physical activity in Veterans with Parkinson disease: A mixed-methods approach

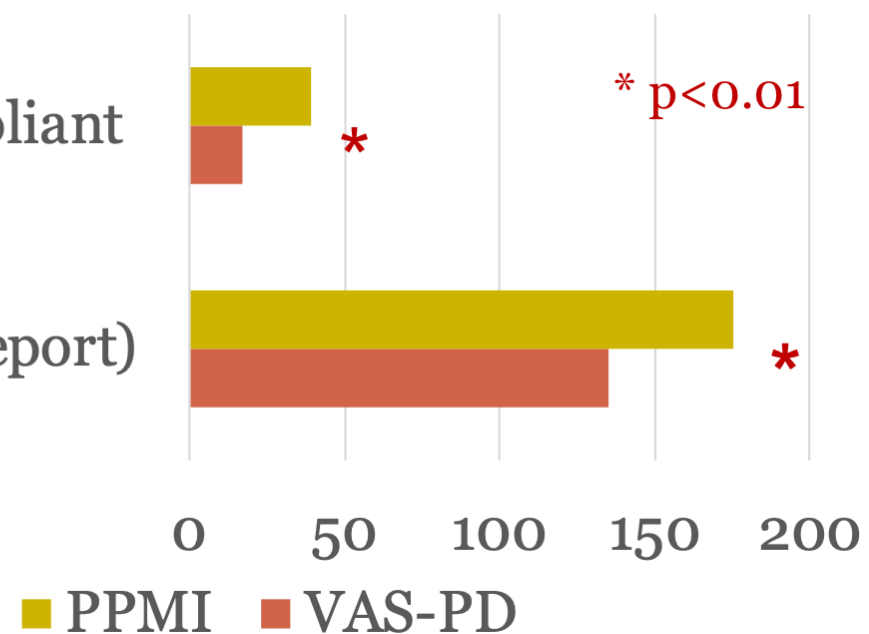


Sneha Mantri<sup>a,b,c,\*</sup>, Stephanie Wood<sup>a</sup>, John E. Duda<sup>a,b</sup>, James F. Morley<sup>a,b</sup>

Variable N=75	Mean (SD)
Disease Duration	5.4 (5.2)
Age	70 (69-74)
MoCA	23.9 (3.9)
PDQ-8	8.1 (6.5)
NMSQ	11.7 (6.3)
UPDRS 3 (ON)	19.9 (9.3)

% AHA compliant

PASE (self-report)



# Patient-Reported Determinants of Exercise



## Factor analysis of freeform comments

- Fear of falling
- Other medical co-morbidities
- Lack of motivation
- Desire to maintain independence

Health



- Exercise partners
- PD group programs (e.g. Rock Steady Boxing)
- Lack of time due to other commitments

Social



- Access to gym or exercise classes
- Safe neighborhood for walking
- Weather

Environment





# How to prescribe exercise to our patients



- Many knowledge gaps (not nearly exhaustive)
  - “best” exercise type (aerobic, resistance, flexibility, etc), “best” frequency or duration
  - “best” stage for intervention
  - Translation from short-term controlled studies to durable exercise in the community
  - How do we get patients to increase activity levels
- Knowledge gaps should not limit our recommendations to patients
- **How do we prescribe exercise to our patients?**

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

R<sub>x</sub>

REFILL \_\_\_\_\_ TIMES



PRODUCT SELECTION PERMITTED

DISPENSE AS WRITTEN

DEA NO. \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Reorder Item #6102

Total Pharmacy Supply, Inc.

1-800-878-2822

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**R<sub>x</sub>**

REFILL \_\_\_\_\_ TIMES

*levodopa 25/100*

**Type, amount, frequency, duration**

*Dispense 30 days, 11 refills*

PRODUCT SELECTION PERMITTED

DISPENSE AS WRITTEN

DEA NO. \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Reorder Item #6102

Total Pharmacy Supply, Inc.

1-800-878-2822

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**R<sub>x</sub>**

REFILL \_\_\_\_\_ TIMES

*Exercise!*  
**Get some!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRODUCT SELECTION PERMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
DISPENSE AS WRITTEN

DEA NO. \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Reorder Item #6102

Total Pharmacy Supply, Inc.

1-800-878-2822

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**R<sub>x</sub>**

REFILL \_\_\_\_\_ TIMES

*Aerobic-walking, 2 miles  
Treadmill, once daily  
Dispense 30 days, 11 refills*

PRODUCT SELECTION PERMITTED

DISPENSE AS WRITTEN

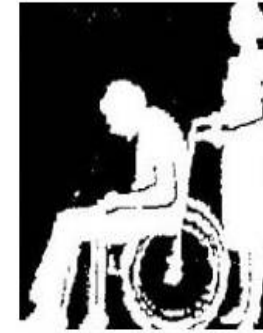
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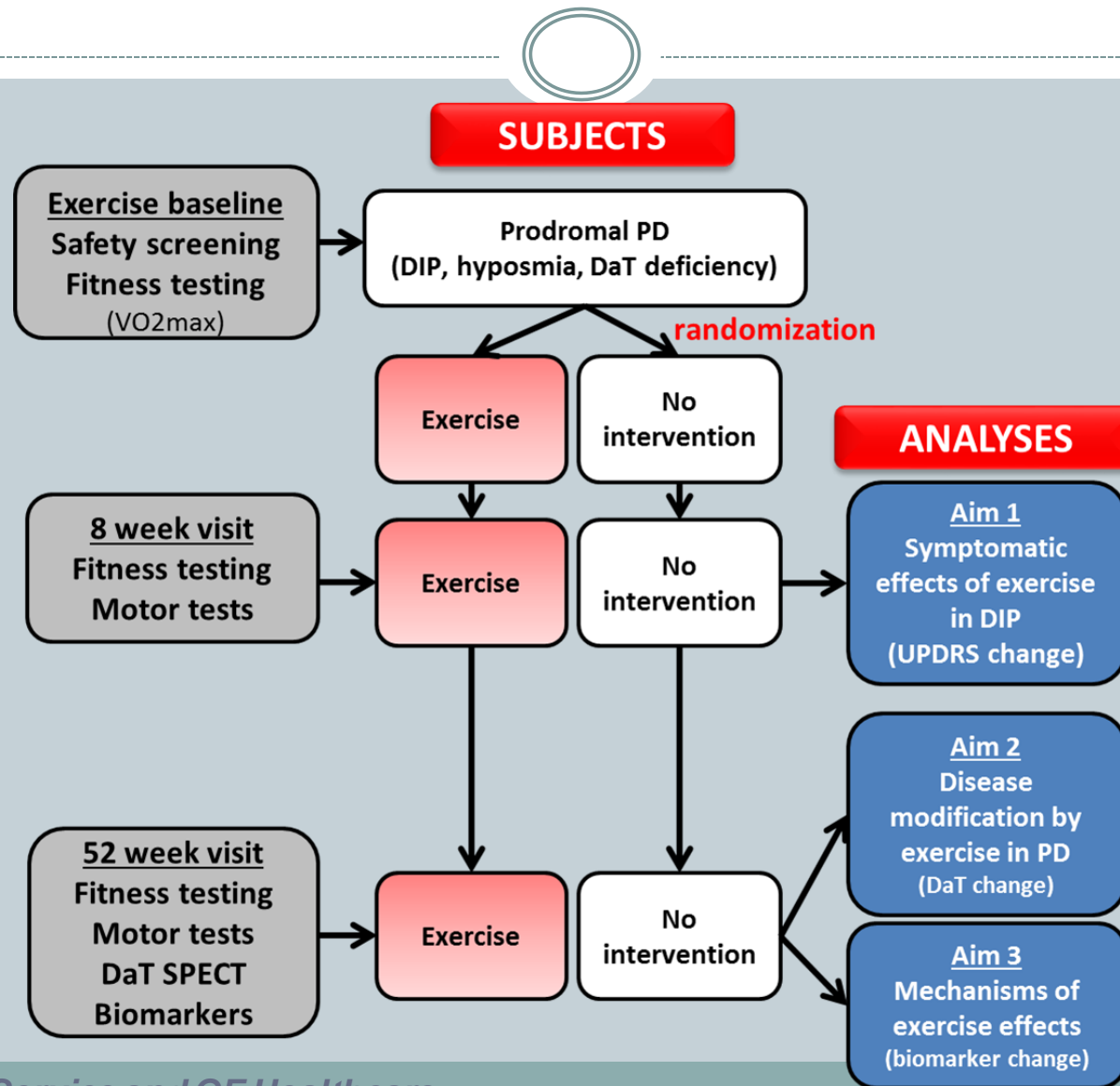
1-800-878-2822

# A tailored approach to exercise Rx in PD



	H/Y 1	H/Y 2	H/Y 3	H/Y 4	H/Y 5
Aerobic/ Endurance	+++ Whatever works	+++ Whatever works	+ UE (handbike) or aqua	+/- UE (handbike)	
Strength	+++ Whatever works	+++ Whatever works	++ Resistance bands	+ Resistance bands	+ Hand grips
Balance	+ Tai chi	++ Tai chi, PT	+++ Balance-based PT	++	
Flexibility	++ yoga	++ yoga	++ chair yoga	+ Chair/ passive	+ Passive

# A randomized trial of exercise in prodromal/early PD



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## The Philadelphia **PADRECC Brain Wellness Clinic**

Want to learn more about lifestyle changes to improve your brain health?  
Do you want to hear about how dietary choices, fitness routines, stress management techniques and social connection can affect your brain health and how to include these into your own life?  
Are you highly motivated to make changes in your lifestyle to improve your brain wellness?  
If so, we would like to invite you to the Philadelphia PADRECC Brain Wellness Clinic.

Dr. John Duda and Heidi Watson, RN created the Brain Wellness Clinic to offer patients with Parkinson's disease and other chronic nervous system disorders the opportunity to focus in-depth on wellness. We will assess your current lifestyle choices that can affect brain wellness and explore wellness goals that may affect the severity and progression of your condition. Together, we will develop a plan that is individualized to your needs with realistic and achievable goals and provide a support system to implement it. We will continue to follow your progress in person or through telehealth. Talk to your PADRECC provider, Dr. Duda or Heidi Watson if you are interested.

Empower yourself by taking control of your brain wellness and fighting back against your condition!  
Here are a few testimonials from recent Brain Wellness Clinic attendees:

*"I learned I had a vitamin deficiency that was affecting my sleep and learned a new strategy for my exercise plan. Overall, it was a great visit."*

*"My experience at the brain wellness clinic was very informative and I'm looking forward to implementing the changes we discussed"*

**VA**

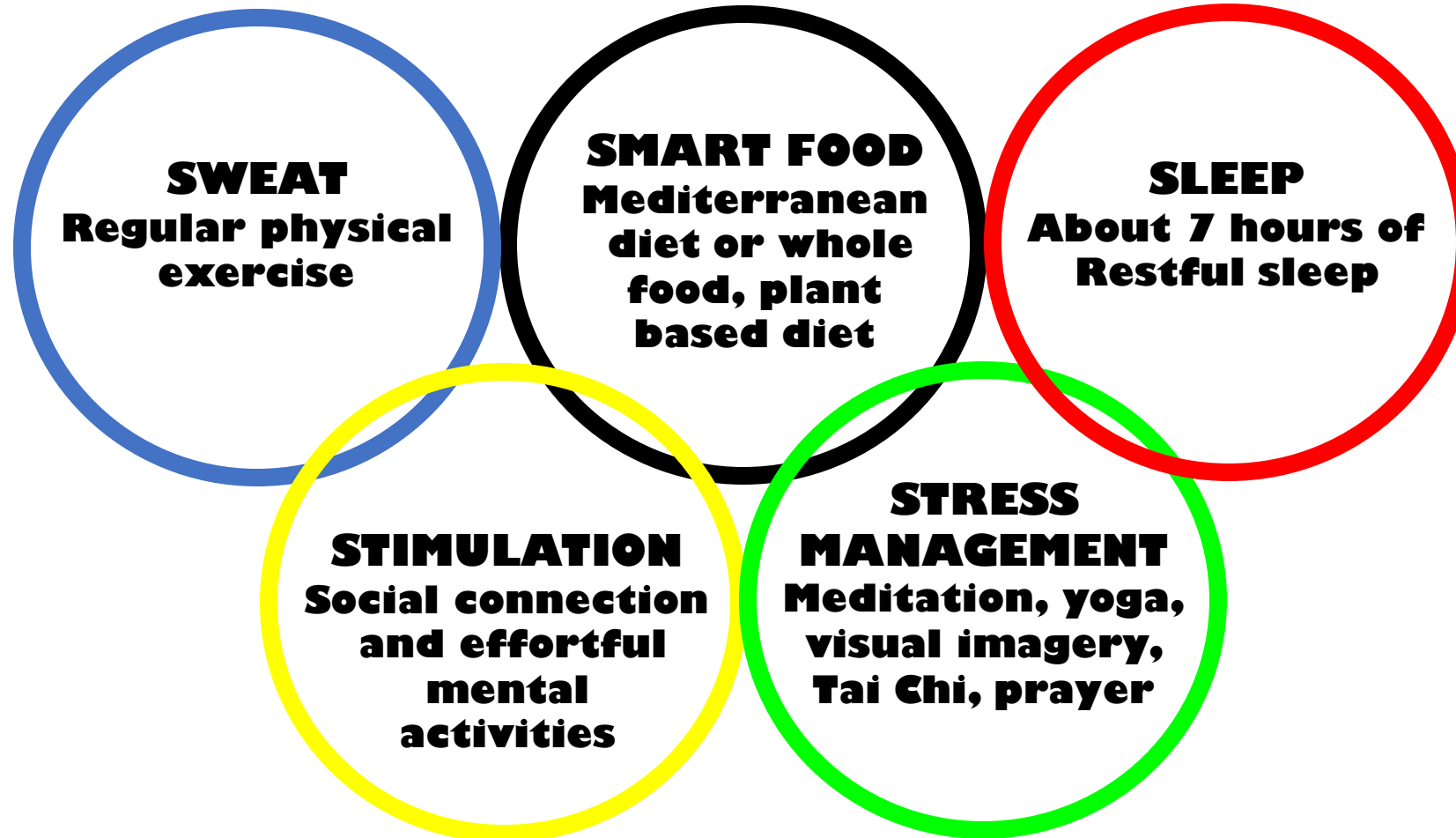


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Corporal Michael J. Crescenzo VA Medical Center

# FIVE THINGS YOUR BRAIN NEEDS TO BE A CHAMPION





## Philadelphia VA PADRECC

*Parkinson's Disease Research,  
Education & Clinical Center*



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### Brain Wellness Goals

**Patient:** Mr.

**Date:** January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Ordering Team:** Dr. John Duda and Heidi Watson, RN

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#### GOALS:

##### **Nutrition/Diet related:**

- Check Blood Sugar in the morning several times a week and record.
- Practice Mindful eating one meal per week. (completely 'unplug', envision that the healthy nutrients are cleaning out your arteries and the antioxidants are protecting you).
- Add 1 tbsp of ground flax seeds per day to meals.
- Add Curcumin to diet (otherwise know as the spice Turmeric)

##### **Sleep:**

- Strive for at least 7 hours of sleep a night. No screen time 1 hour before bed.
- Read label of 'Insomnix' and let us know what is in it before we will recommend a dose of Melatonin.
- we recommend Melatonin for a sleep aid before increasing Clonazepam.

##### **Exercise:**

- Add Tai Chi to exercise regimen. (I didn't find any up to date info on Tai chi in Rittenhouse) Here is one link for classes in Roxborough <http://baztaichi.com/>

##### **Mindfulness:**

- Free meditation guidance <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22&oTopID=22>

*Signature of Ordering Physician*

One of the main benefits I see in people who take charge of their own wellness is changing from a victim or sufferer of a chronic disease to someone who is fighting back!



<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/scanlan-fighting-back-with-fists-against-parkinsons-disease>

# Where to send your Veterans to start learning how to fight back

**VA** | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Search Contact us Sign in

VA Benefits and Health Care About VA Find a VA Location

VA » Health Care » Whole Health

## Whole Health

- Whole Health
  - Home
  - Get Involved
  - Veteran Resources
  - Professional Resources
  - Circle of Health
  - Build Your Personal Health Plan
  - More Health Care

**QUICK LINKS**

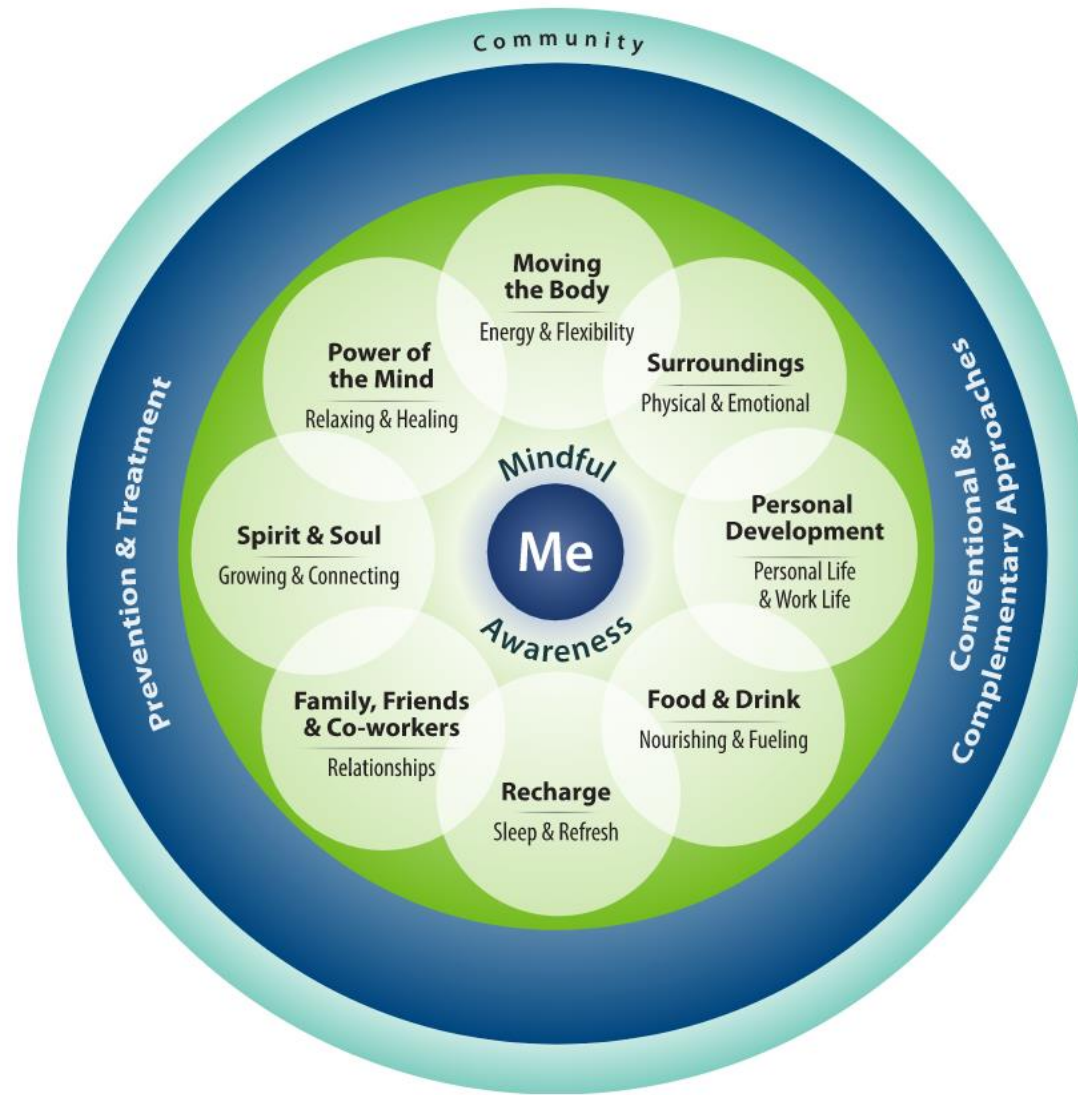
- Self-care Blog Series
- Discover What Matters
- Circle of Health

**Discover What Matters**

To learn more about how you can be at the center of your care, check out VA's new video.

Learn more »

# Circle of health



# Whole health Blog posts



## Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #18 – Taking Time to Pause

Monday, May 11, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth  
VAntage Point Contributor 190 views

Living busy lives can sometimes mean that we prioritize ourselves last. When we make our lists of ...

#LiveWholeHealth

Guided Meditation

meditation

Read More



## Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #17 – Mindful Breathing

Friday, May 8, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth  
VAntage Point Contributor 1 comment 807 views

Mindful breathing increases the flow of oxygen to your brain and allows your nervous system to promote a ...

#LiveWholeHealth

Guided Meditation

meditation

mindful breathing

Read More



## Live Whole Health Self-Care Series #16 – Visualization: Imagining a Vacation

Wednesday, May 6, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth  
VAntage Point Contributor 733 views

Visualization—imagining yourself in a specific situation—has a long history of helping people both ...

g/livewholehealth/

#LiveWholeHealth

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/tag/livewholehealth/>

# Veterans Whole Health Education Handouts




## Whole Health: Information for Veterans

Listed below are Veteran whole health education handouts to support the Whole Health journey. They are organized around the eight areas of self-care in the [Circle of Health](#) and the two areas in the middle.





### At the Center of the Circle of Health

- Whole Health: It Starts with Me: [PDF](#) 

### Mindful Awareness













- An Introduction to Mindful Awareness: [PDF](#) 
- Mindful Awareness Practice in Daily Living: [PDF](#) 
- Precautions with Using Mindful Awareness Practices [PDF](#) 

### Power of the Mind





- An Introduction to the Power of the Mind: [PDF](#) 
- Breathing and Health: [PDF](#) 
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation and Progressive Relaxation [PDF](#) 
- Seated Meditation [PDF](#) 
- Biofeedback: [PDF](#) 
- Mantram Meditation [PDF](#) 
- Autogenic Training [PDF](#) 



## Food and Drink

- An Introduction to Food and Drink for Whole Health: [PDF](#) 
- Carbohydrates and Your Health - Glycemic Index, Glycemic Load and Blood Sugars: [PDF](#) 
- Deciding How to be a Healthier Eater [PDF](#) 
- Eating to Reduce Inflammation [PDF](#) 
- Healthy Tips on Eating Out and Grocery Shopping: [PDF](#) 
- Mindful Eating: [PDF](#) 
- How a Healthy Gut Makes for a Healthier You: [PDF](#) 
- Probiotics for Specific Conditions [PDF](#) 
- How to Eat a Mediterranean Diet: [PDF](#) 
- When Your Food & Drink Could Be Causing You Problems: Elimination Diets: [PDF](#) 
- Eating to Reduce Irritable Bowel Symptoms: The FODMaP Diet: [PDF](#) 
- Whole Health Food, Drink, Activity and Symptom Log: [PDF](#) 

## Working the Body

- An Introduction to Working the Body for Whole Health: [PDF](#) 
- Get Moving: Adding Physical Activity into Your Routine: [PDF](#) 
- An Introduction to Yoga for Whole Health: [PDF](#) 
- An Introduction to Tai Chi and Qigong for Whole Health [PDF](#) 

## WHOLE HEALTH: INFORMATION FOR VETERANS

### Eating to Reduce Inflammation



Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and enables YOU to take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest. It starts with YOU. It is fueled by the power of knowing yourself and what will really work for you in your life. Once you have some ideas about this, your team can help you with the skills, support, and follow up you need to reach your goals.

All resources provided in these handouts are reviewed by VHA clinicians and Veterans. No endorsement of any specific products is intended. Best wishes!

<http://www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare/>



### Eating to Reduce Inflammation

#### What is inflammation?

Inflammation is one of the body's ways of protecting itself. It helps fight off infections, increases blood flow to places where healing is needed, and signals us, through pain, that something is wrong. But if inflammation levels are too high, or if a person stays in an inflamed state for too long (has chronic inflammation), it can lead to disease.

#### What diseases are associated with unhealthy inflammation?

Many diseases are linked to inflammation. These are often chronic (long-lasting) diseases, which can be very hard to treat. Here are some examples:<sup>1,2</sup>

- Alzheimer's disease
- Asthma
- Autoimmune diseases (diseases where the body is attacked by its own immune system). These include rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, and lupus.
- Cancer
- Chronic obstructive lung disease, also called COPD (emphysema and bronchitis)
- Chronic pain (e.g. back pain, neck pain, headaches, arthritis)
- Depression
- Heart disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Obesity

There are many others as well. What they all have in common is that they can often be prevented or reduced if you focus on eating some foods and not eating others. This way of eating is often called the Anti-Inflammatory Diet. Unlike other diets, an anti-inflammatory diet is not meant to be a diet for losing weight. It supports your health in other ways.

#### How do I eat an anti-inflammatory diet?

It is thought that over 60% of all chronic disease could be prevented if people ate a healthy diet.<sup>3</sup> What does that diet look like? Some of the most important parts of it are listed below.<sup>4</sup> Choose any one to start out. Over time, you can add others at a pace that works for you.

#### The Anti-Inflammatory Diet: Top Ten Suggestions

1. **Pay attention to proteins.** If you get most of your proteins from plants like beans, whole grains, and nuts, your levels of inflammation will be lower. If you eat red meat, it is best to eat grass-fed meat or wild game rather than grain-fed beef.<sup>5</sup> Wild-caught (as opposed to farmed) fish can be a great source of protein. As journalist Michael Pollan says in his book *Food Rules*, "The fewer the feet, the better the meat."<sup>6</sup>
2. **Eat more fiber.** Fiber, which is a form of carbohydrate, lowers inflammation.<sup>7</sup> Read food labels. Different groups suggest different daily amounts, but try for the following:
  - Women 19-50 years old: 25 grams daily

- Men 19-50: 38 grams daily
- Women over 50: 21 grams daily
- Men over 50: 30 grams daily

Good sources of fiber include whole grains, oatmeal, nuts, berries, beans, vegetables, brown rice, and popcorn. Potato skins have a lot of fiber. If you don't already eat much fiber, increase your intake of these foods slowly to avoid bowel discomfort.

3. **Eat your vegetables and fruits.** When it comes to ideas for healthier eating, eating more fruits and vegetables is usually at the top of the list. In addition to their many other benefits, vegetables and fruits reduce inflammation. Berries and cherries are especially good options. Fruit juice is *not* usually a good choice because it is high in sugars and low in fiber. Making your own smoothies is a good idea. Choose dark colored produce that is many different colors. Plants get their colors from phytonutrients, helpful compounds that are anti-inflammatory. Strive for a minimum of 5 cups of vegetables and fruits per day. If you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, emphasize non-starchy vegetables over fruits.
4. **Use more anti-inflammatory herbs and spices.**<sup>8,9</sup> A 2012 study found that some of the best anti-inflammatory spices to eat, in order, are paprika, rosemary, ginger, turmeric, sage, and cumin. An earlier study looked at other chemical properties of spices and found that cloves, ground Jamaican allspice, cinnamon, sage, marjoram, and tarragon are also great choices.

*Guidelines 5-8 are related to fats. In the body, different types of fats are processed in different ways, which can either increase or decrease inflammation.*

5. **Avoid trans-fats.** *Trans-fats*, which are added to foods to increase their shelf life, can add to the body's inflammation. Avoid foods that have labels saying they have "partially hydrogenated" oils. Foods that often have trans-fats include baked goods (e.g. cakes, piecrusts, frozen pizza, and cookies) and fried foods (e.g. donuts, fries).
6. **Limit saturated fats.** Most (not all) *saturated fats* also promote inflammation. These fats mostly come from animal sources such as meats (lamb, pork, chicken with skin, fatty beef), and dairy products like milk, cheese, cream, and butter. If you eat meat, a good general rule is to try to eat white meats, fish and other seafood. Saturated fats from plants (coconut and palm kernel oils) may not be as much of a problem.
7. **Balance omega-6's and omega-3's.** You may have heard about *essential fatty acids*. These are types of *polyunsaturated fats* that your body can't make on its own. You have to get them from your diet. You need both *omega-6 and omega-3 fats* for your body to work properly, but they need to be in the right balance. The problem is that eating high amounts of omega-6 fats compared to omega-3's can increase inflammation. Unfortunately, that is exactly what most Americans do. Our ancestors ate twice as much omega-6 fat as omega-3. Nowadays, most Americans eat 14 to 25 times as much omega-6.

Omega-6's come from plant oils like corn oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil, as well as nuts and seeds. Omega-3's are found in fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and mackerel. Try to eat at least two servings of fish (3-4 ounces each) weekly. Fish oil supplements are widely available. A usual dose is 1000-2000 mg per day. If you are taking blood thinners, talk to your doctor before you start taking fish oil. Omega 3's are also found in whole grains, walnuts, and green leafy vegetables. Eating a Mediterranean diet will give you a much healthier balance of omega-6's and omega 3's than the average American diet. For more information, reference the Whole Health handout "[How to Eat a Mediterranean Diet](#)."

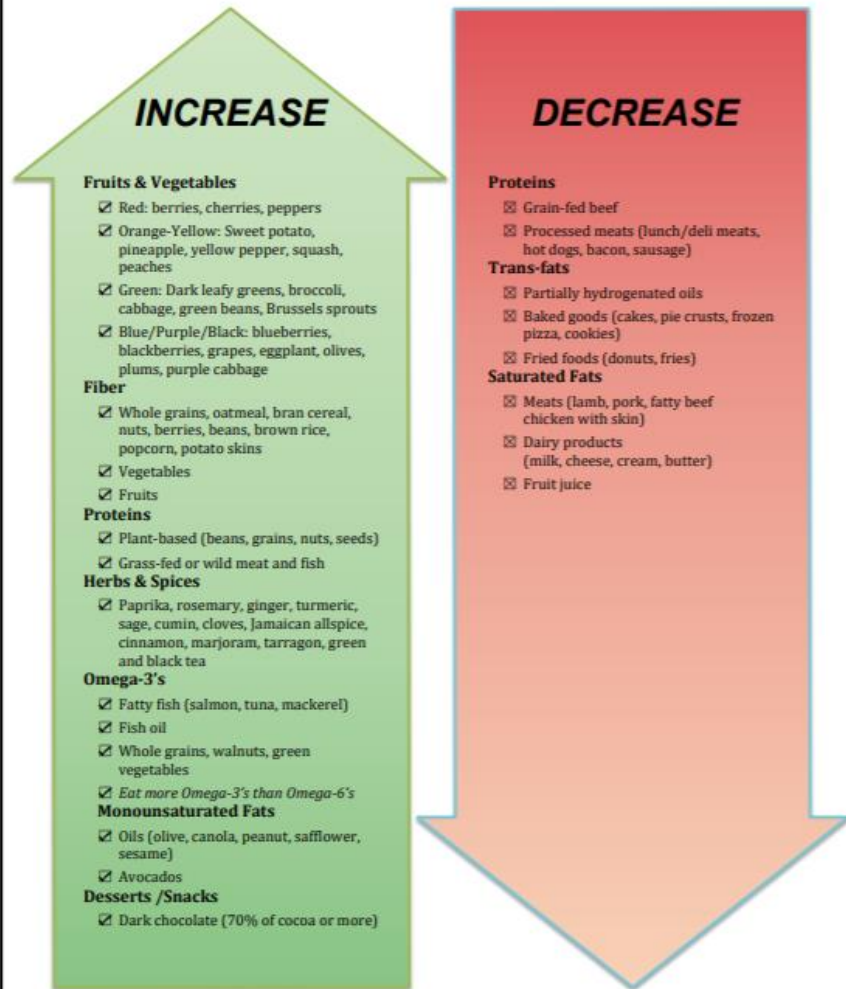
8. **Eat monounsaturated fats.** There are also *monounsaturated fats*. One of these, olive oil, is known to reduce inflammation, blood pressure, bad cholesterol, and blood sugar levels. Other sources of this type of fat are canola, peanut, safflower, and sesame oils. Avocados are another good source.  
  
Some experts suggest you get ¼ of your fat from saturated fats, ¼ from polyunsaturated, and ½ from monounsaturated. Many diets recommend that total fats add up to about ½ of all the calories you eat.<sup>10</sup> You have to explore what works best for you.
9. **Eat some dark chocolate.**<sup>11</sup> Most people like this suggestion. To help with inflammation, dark chocolate should be at least 70% cocoa mass. The cocoa percentage will be on the label. One and a half ounces daily decreases inflammation and also lowers blood pressure.
10. **If you choose to drink alcohol, choose red wine.** Red wine is known to decrease inflammation.<sup>12</sup> Of course, don't take up drinking to get this benefit. One study found that drinking white wine and cooking with olive oil worked together to lower inflammation as well.<sup>13</sup> Other beverages, like grape juice,<sup>14</sup> have been found to have some benefits, too, though we need more studies to see how different beverages compare. Remember, though, that even one drink of alcohol a day can increase risk of breast cancer.<sup>15</sup>

#### Can anything besides what I eat lower inflammation?

In addition to watching what you eat and drink, focusing on other areas of self-care can also help lower inflammation. For example:

- Working the body reduces chronic inflammation.<sup>16,17</sup>
- Stress raises inflammation in the body,<sup>18</sup> so do your best to keep your stress at a healthy level. There are many ways to manage stress, such as breathing exercises and meditation. These are outlined in the Power of Mind handouts.
- Depression is linked to more inflammation too.<sup>19</sup> Explore ways to support good mental and emotional health.
- Getting enough sleep helps to keep inflammation under control.<sup>20</sup>
- Some studies show that having healthy relationships with others lowers inflammation.<sup>21</sup>
- Being a spiritual/religious person also seems to be linked to less inflammation.<sup>22</sup>

## A Quick Guide to Eating and Inflammation



## For you to consider:

- After reading this handout, are you concerned about inflammation? If so, what concerns you?
- Do you want to use food and drink to reduce the amount of inflammation in your body? If yes, which of the Top 10 Suggestions will you focus on first?
- Are there other areas of self-care you will focus on to reduce inflammation? (Refer to the ideas on the bottom of page 3). What goal will you set for yourself?

The information in this handout is general. **Please work with your health care team to use the information in the best way possible to promote your health and happiness.**

## For more information:

ORGANIZATION	RESOURCES	WEBSITE
Veterans Health Administration	A variety of Whole Health handouts on healthy eating	<a href="https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts/index.asp">https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts/index.asp</a>

This handout was written for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) by J. Adam Rindfleisch, MPhil, MD, Associate Professor, Medical Director of the Integrative Health Program, University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. The handout was reviewed and edited by Veterans and VHA subject matter experts.

## References

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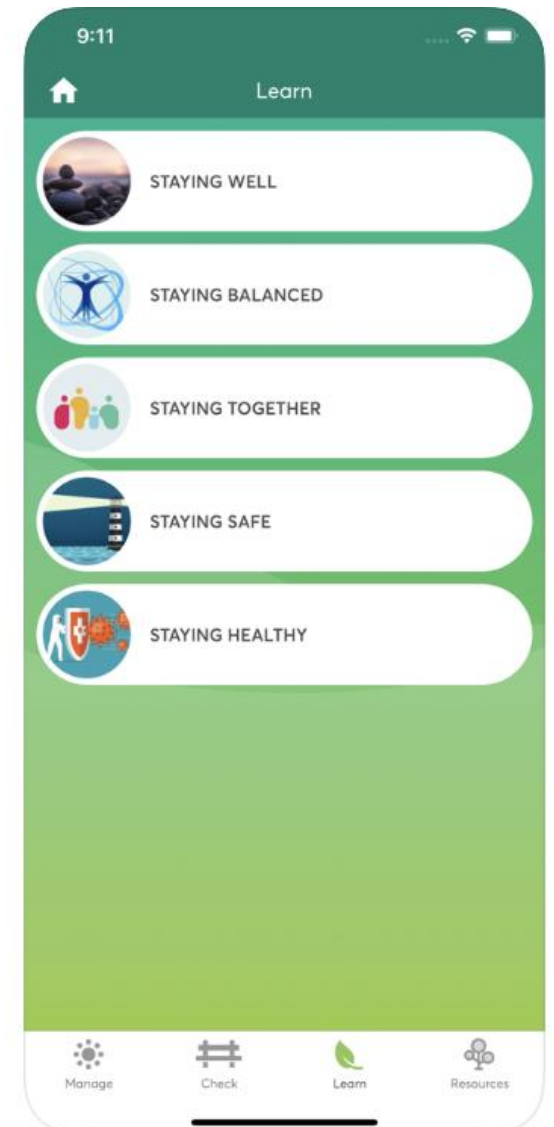
# VA COVID Coach app



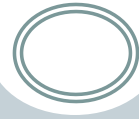
- Created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Features:
  - Education about coping during the pandemic
  - Tools for self-care and to improve emotional well-being
  - Trackers to check your mood and measure your growth toward personal goals
  - Graphs to visualize progress over time



# VA COVID Coach app



# Other whole health related apps from the VA



- **PTSD Coach** – This app connects users to tools for managing post-traumatic stress symptoms. It supports Service members and Veterans with self-assessments, symptom-tracking capabilities, educational materials and stress coping skills.
- **MOVE! Coach** – This app is a 19-week weight loss program for Veterans, Service members, their families, and others who want to lose weight. The app helps participants track and receive feedback on their progress with weight, diet and exercise goals.
- **Moving Forward** – This app allows users to access on-the-go tools and learn problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. While this app was designed for Veterans and Service members, it can be used by anyone.
- **Stay Quit Coach** – This app provides information about smoking cessation, along with motivational messages, interactive tools and support contacts to help users stay smoke-free and cope with urges to smoke.
- **Mindfulness Coach** – This app leads the user through steps to learn how to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness means grounding yourself in the present moment. It has been shown to be helpful for reducing stress and helping people cope with unpleasant thoughts and emotions.
- **Guided Meditation Podcasts** - Choose from several brief podcasts designed to help settle the mind and increase a sense of relaxation and peace (located at the bottom of the page).

# VHA and Parkinson's Foundation Formalize Partnership



- **Shared Goal of Partnership:**
  - Advance and *improve the care and quality of life for Veterans living with PD* through collaborative education, research, and services.
- **Objectives**
  - Increase Veterans' and providers access to PD information and resources
  - Educate VHA staff on PD disease management and modifying therapies
  - Improve services coordination and navigation for Veterans with PD



# PD Health @ Home – Daily Virtual Programming



- **Mindfulness Mondays**
- Relaxation practice to boost brain power and reduce stress
- **Expert Briefings Tuesdays**
- Webinars on PD topics
- **Wellness Wednesdays**
- Facebook Live or educational video
- **Take Time Thursdays**
- Regional webinars highlighting local resources, allied health, or COE's
- **Fitness Fridays**
- 10-part fitness series with a different focus every week.

**Visit [www.parkinson.org/pdhealth](http://www.parkinson.org/pdhealth) for more information and to register.**

# Take home points



- Preventing dementia requires a broad approach addressing multiple risk factors
- Exercise is critically important and we need to get better at prescribing useful exercise routines
- The VA Whole Health Approach is helping Veterans help themselves
- VA and the Parkinson's Foundation are working together for the benefit of Veterans with PD
- Online resources enable Veterans to Fight back with healthy lifestyle choices

**QUESTIONS?**

