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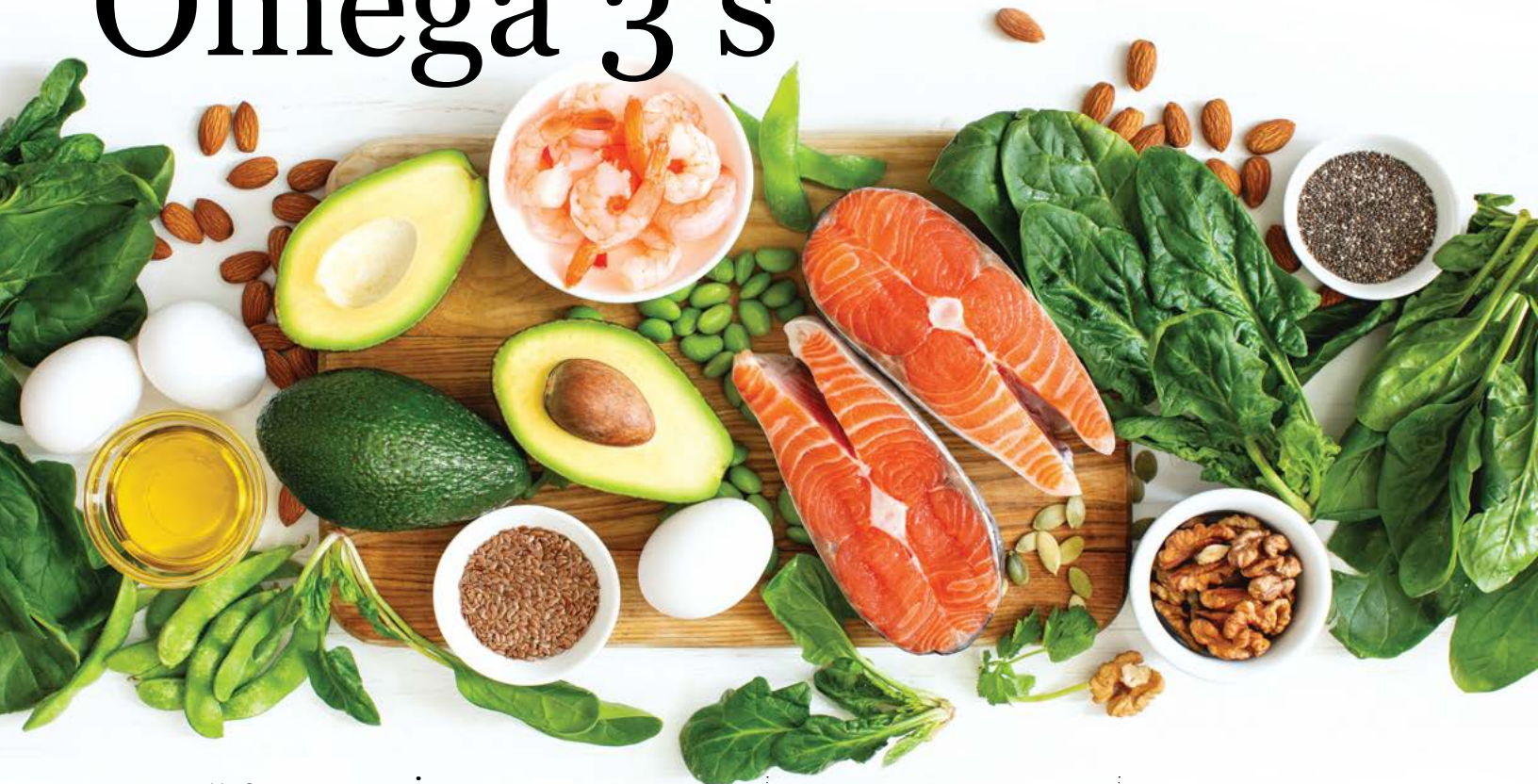
Gardening to feel better

If you ask any committed gardener, they will likely tell you how important their garden is to their well-being. Research shows that gardening can increase resilience and decrease stress. Accessing these benefits can be as simple as growing flowers in pots on your porch or as extensive as a large backyard vegetable garden.

Spending time in nature, including gardening, has many health benefits:

- Boosted vitamin D levels from exposure to sunlight (don't forget sunscreen and a hat to prevent burning!)
- Increased focus and attention
- Reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol
- Reduced mental fatigue
- Increased social connection and engagement with community gardening
- Regular physical activity
- Increased access to nutritious plant food
- Elevated mood and feelings of happiness
- May reduce blood pressure

Why you need Omega 3's



Not all fats in your diet are the same.

Omega 3 fats are an essential type of dietary fat that can be good for you. However, many of us don't eat enough of the types of foods that supply this healthy fat.

WHAT ARE OMEGA 3'S?

Omega 3's are a type of essential polyunsaturated fat. The body uses omega 3 fatty acids to build hormones, decrease inflammation, provide energy, and as part of the structure of cell walls. Because your body cannot make polyunsaturated fatty acids, you have to get them from your food.

The three most common omega 3's are alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Each of these fatty acids performs different beneficial functions.

BENEFITS

Fats often get a bad rap, but every cell in the body relies on a certain amount of fat to function.

Ongoing research has shown many potential benefits to a diet with adequate EPA and DHA. These include:

- Better heart health
- Proper infant growth and development
- Lower risk of cancer
- Decreased risk of dementia
- Decreased risk of age-related macular degeneration
- Relief of dry eye symptoms
- Reduced symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis

EAT MORE OMEGA 3'S

For more of the omega 3's EPA and DHA, choose:

- Fatty fish. Choose those lower in mercury, such as salmon, mackerel, anchovies, and sardines.

For more of the omega 3 ALA, choose:

- Ground flax seeds and flax oil
- Chia seeds
- Walnuts
- Canola oil
- Soy foods such as soybean oil, tofu, and edamame
- Hemp seeds

Talk to your doctor if you are thinking about taking an omega 3 supplement to see if it's right for you.

Move more for your brain

Movement doesn't just support physical health. It boosts mental health, too. The more you get your body moving, the more benefits you get from all those feel-good chemicals soothing your mental space—just another good reason to get moving every day.

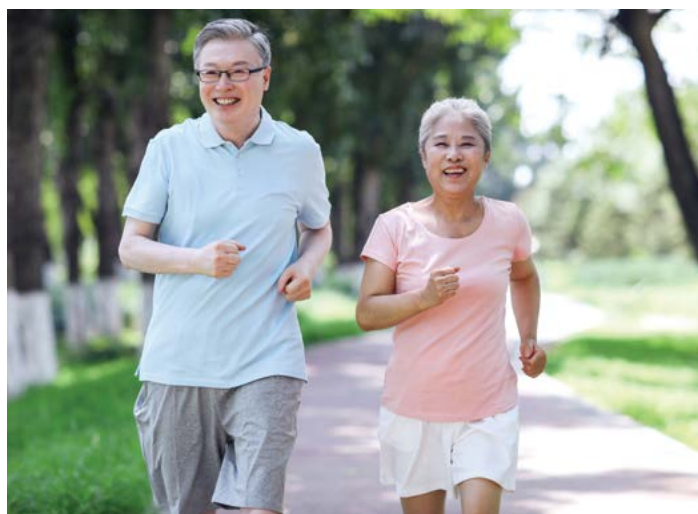


A BIT ON BRAIN CHEMISTRY

Your brain relies on a complex network of chemical signals to function. The cells of your brain, called neurons, “talk” to each other using chemical messengers known as neurotransmitters. There are neurotransmitters that regulate sleep, memory, learning, and stress, among other things.

Imbalances in neurotransmitters can impact your mental health. If you regularly deal with stressful situations, your brain releases more neurotransmitters that signal stress. You may feel:

- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anxious
- Trouble sleeping
- Depression
- Difficulty experiencing joy and happiness



EXERCISE CAN HELP

When you move your body and get your blood pumping, it has an immediate impact on your brain. Over time, those benefits add up and can improve mental health.

Movement stimulates the release of neurotransmitters that improve your mood. It also decreases chemical signals that promote anxiety and depression. The result is a brain that feels better and resists succumbing to stress.

Those positive brain chemicals are like free medicine for the brain. You may feel:

- Increased energy
- Better sleep
- Alert and focused
- Fewer feelings of anxiety or depression
- More connected to the world around you
- Greater enjoyment of life

GET MOVING

While all movement is good, some types of movement provide more brain-boosting benefits. Aerobic exercise is particularly effective at improving mental health. A minimum of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each week is recommended. Consistency is key to getting the most benefits for your mental and emotional health.

Aerobic exercise is the type that gets your heart rate up and your blood pumping. You should feel like you're working hard but still be able to carry on a conversation. Examples include:

- Taking a brisk walk
- Jogging
- Biking
- Playing a sport
- Dancing
- Taking an aerobics class



Keeping work-from-home in its place

Traveling home from work at the end of the day is a clear signal to transition from work mode to home mode. But, what happens when you work from home and you never truly leave your “office?”



Protecting Home Life from Work Encroachment

1. **Create a “starting work routine.”** Set up clear signals that you are moving from home mode to work mode. This includes whatever you need to do to intentionally “show up” to work in the morning.
2. **Have a plan for your work day.** Treat your work-from-home day similar to a day in the office. Have a plan for what you hope to accomplish and, most importantly, when your work day ends.
3. **Schedule breaks to step away.** Plan when you will take breaks and step away from your computer. Save any chores or home tasks for those scheduled times.
4. **Set boundaries with loved ones.** It’s essential for your productivity to have times when you work without interruption. Ask your loved ones to save time together for lunch breaks and off hours.
5. **Establish an end-of-work-day ritual.** Create a signal that you have finished work for the day. You can make a priority list for the next day, check in with your boss, or tidy your desk to signal the day is over.
6. **Turn off your computer and work email.** You’ll be a more productive and valuable employee if you care for yourself by using your non-work hours for things that matter most to you.