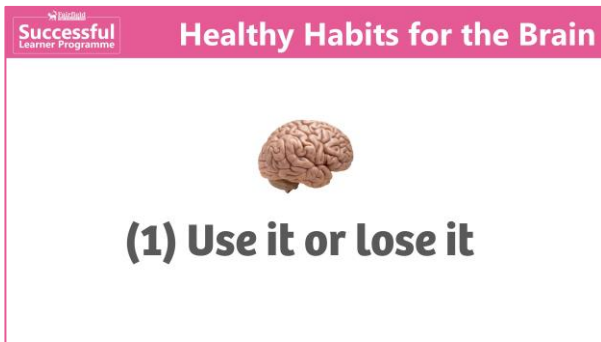
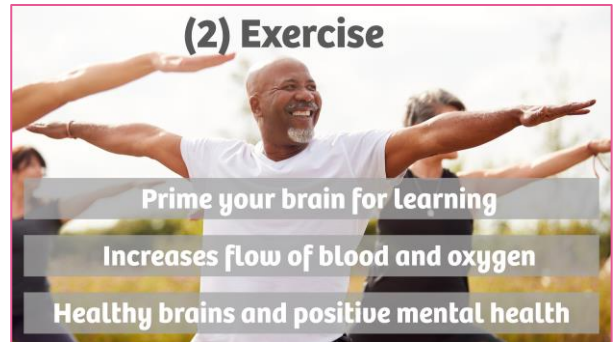


# Healthy Habits for the Brain

Neuroscientists have made the following recommendations to ensure our brains are healthy and in the best possible condition to become a successful learner.



To maximise our neuroplasticity, we need to keep using our brain, just like we need to keep exercising to stay fit. You need to keep challenging your brain - learning new knowledge - developing new skills - recalling information. The more you think the more you will learn, the more you learn the easier it is to think.



Exercise is fantastic for your physical health and studies show that exercise can prime your brain for learning. Physical activity increases the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain, promotes the growth of new neurons and strengthens neural connections. Aerobic exercise benefits cognitive function, how well the brain works, and your memory.



Our brains need the right fuel to function at their best. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish, nuts and seeds help in building and repairing brain cells. Fruits, vegetables and nuts, rich in antioxidants such as vitamin C and E and essential nutrients like B vitamins, zinc and magnesium, support us to have healthy brains. A well-balanced diet can provide the essential building blocks for our brains.



The most important activity that has a positive impact on our brains, mental health and ability to learn is sleep! Good quality sleep is crucial for a healthy brain and to be a successful learner. During sleep, the brain continues to strengthen neural connections - new neurons are created and damaged ones are repaired. Sleep helps us store newly acquired information and builds memories.

## Four questions for further reflection

How can you 'use it or lose it' to keep your brain in the best possible condition?

What improvements could be made to your diet?

How can you increase the amount of exercise that you complete?

How much sleep do you typically get and what improvements can be made?