

# How to Get Rid of *Brain Fog*



BY  
Taylor Foster

**WellTheory**

# How to Get Rid of *Brain Fog*



If you've ever experienced the sensation of walking into a room and forgetting why and how you got there, then you've experienced brain fog. Brain fog is defined as impaired cognitive function that may cause symptoms of forgetfulness, mental sluggishness, the inability to mentally process at a normal rate, forgetting words while speaking, and an overall feeling of not being able to fully grasp what is going on around you. This lack of mental clarity can happen to anyone, and most of us experience it at one point or another. This phenomenon is usually recurring and can be triggered by extreme fatigue and lack of sleep, stress, standing for long periods of time, or it may seem to affect you out of nowhere. Sometimes, brain fog is a symptom of bigger issues brewing beneath the surface. Read on to find out how to protect yourself against brain fog and how to bid it farewell for good. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

# Causes of Brain Fog

---



Talk of what brain health is and how to achieve it has been on the rise in recent years, especially since COVID-19 swept through the nation. A common symptom among long COVID sufferers has been the complaint of lack of normal brain function after being sick. COVID-19 has been shown to cause brain inflammation and change how some brain cells act and respond. Data is sticky here considering it is still genuinely fresh, but it cannot be denied that many who have long-term side effects from COVID-19 list brain fog as a top complaint.

## Who Is Affected By Brain Fog?

Besides COVID-19, brain fog may also affect those with:

- postural tachycardia syndrome (POTS)
- chronic fatigue syndrome
- lupus
- autism disorders
- fibromyalgia
- mastocytosis

Ultimately, anyone who may have poor, chronic lifestyle habits that could ultimately lead to disease developing, could be at risk of triggering symptoms of brain fog. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

## What Are Lifestyle Habits And How Do They Affect Brain Fog?

Lifestyle habits are those repetitive rituals we do that evolve into a routine over time. Think of brushing your teeth, showering, and going to work, all repetitive acts we do without giving much thought. Considering how lifestyle habits affect our overall wellness, we can expand further into the broader topics of hydration, movement, and stress, as these habits largely impact our inflammatory status. Research has shown that unhealthy daily life habits have the ability to cause a neuroinflammatory response that may result in brain fog symptoms as we continue the ongoing negative patterns day after day. Breaking negative habits and establishing healthy, daily routines can clear up a whole slew of issues with consistent diligence. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

## Is Brain Fog a Mental Illness?

The condition of neuroinflammation itself is not a mental illness, but systemic chronic inflammation is a risk factor that increases the chance of developing a chronic disease later on in life. The leading cause of disability and death worldwide is caused by chronic inflammatory diseases, some of which may have been prevented by healthy lifestyle habits. Research shows that your environment impacts your state of health, and small changes to such can make big impacts on your health status overtime. Reduce systemic inflammation by consciously making healthy choices each day. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

# Natural Remedies to Get Rid of Brain Fog

---



Protecting your brain from cognitive dysfunction and decline is possible by adding in healthy and sustainable habits to your daily routine little by little. Inflammation can be helpful for healing purposes if you have sustained a traumatic event or injury, but long-term chronic inflammation can be quite damaging to your function and well-being. Read on for 7 healthy habits to prevent and get rid of brain fog. ([Source](#))



## 01 Eat an *Anti-Inflammatory* Diet

Food affects how we think, feel, and exist. The more intuitive and in tune with your body you are, the more likely you are to make healthier choices. Food is a powerful weapon that may be used one of two ways: as a form of medicine, or as a very slow poison. The positive effects of a nutrient dense, anti-inflammatory diet such as the AIP diet are endless and may include healthy gut bacteria, balanced hormones, halting unhealthy gene expression and activity, and of course reducing systemic chronic inflammation that drives brain fog.

**Steer clear of foods that cause inflammation, which include:**

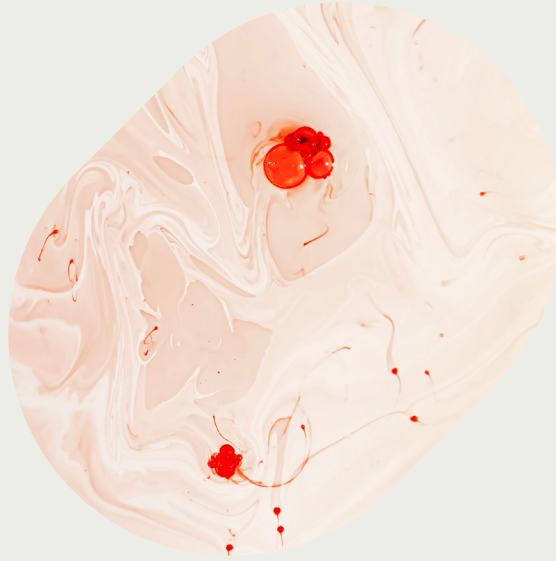
- Refined carbohydrates and gluten: white bread, pasta, baked goods, etc.
- Fried foods
- Fake sugars and sweeteners found in sodas, juices, teas, and other beverages
- Any foods you are aware of that cause you to react in a way that reflects food intolerance or sensitivity

**Include foods in your diet to fight brain fog symptoms such as:**

- Healthy fats: ghee, coconut oil, avocado oil, extra virgin olive oil, salmon, mackerel, tuna, sardines, almonds, and walnuts
- Leafy green veggies: spinach, kale, collard greens
- A variety of colorful fruits and veggies

([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))





## 02 *Balance* Blood Sugar

Keeping a close eye on blood sugar isn't just for diabetics. Studies have shown that regulation of blood sugar impacts how our brain functions in response to glucose levels. The brain relies on glucose as its main energy source, so any sort of disturbance, such as dysregulated blood sugar going too high or too low on a consistent basis, may be cause for impaired brain function. Include balanced meals on a consistent basis each day that include whole foods with high quality sources of protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, as well as phytonutrients.

### **Next Steps to Balance Your Blood Sugar**

- Healthy and balanced sources of carbohydrates and phytonutrients include a wide range of diverse and colorful fruits and vegetables.
- Limit processed and packaged foods and refined sugars and carbohydrates. Paying close attention to not only what you are eating but also how often, will help keep your blood sugar stabilized.
- If you struggle in this area, ask your health care provider about using a continuous glucose monitor to get first-hand information on how food may be affecting you.

([Source](#), [Source](#))



## 03 *Stay Hydrated*

Drinking water is important to support the function of your body and sustain the health of all your organs. Your brain is a pretty crucial organ you want to keep in good health, and it requires hydration for optimal cognition, quality of sleep, and mood. Research has shown that the effects of dehydration on your beautiful 3-pound brain may be a cause of decreased cognitive ability. More specifically, when you are dehydrated you will need to work harder mentally to achieve simple tasks than when you are hydrated.

If you have a hard time drinking enough water during your busy day, check out our quick tips to help you reach your hydration goals and achieve clear-headedness:

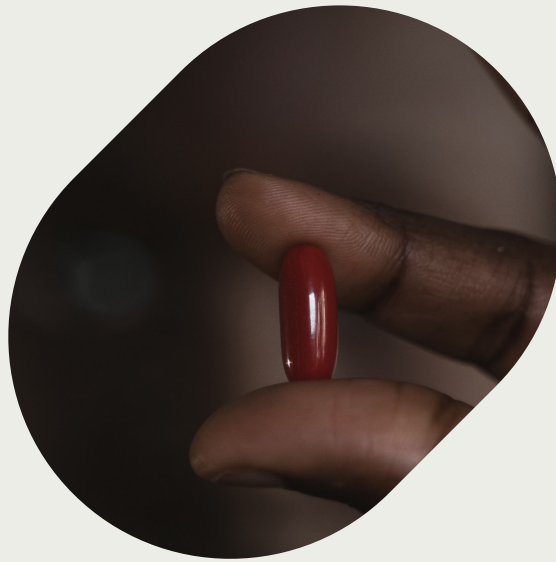
### **Daily Hydration Tips**

- **Leave a glass of water next to your bed at night** so it is there for you to drink first thing in the morning, before you even get out of bed.
- **Have a water bottle handy with time markers on it** (like [this one](#)) to help you reach your goals every hour.

Modifying how much fluid you drink daily may be necessary depending on your level of movement, stress from infections or illness, or a hot or humid environment. And of course, if you are pregnant or nursing you may need an increased amount of fluids to function well.

([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))





## 04 *Supplement with Nootropics*

Supplementing for brain health in addition to a consistent routine that includes a healthy diet and adequate hydration can go a long way in supporting mental clarity. Nootropics, brain performance enhancers, have been said to improve memory, attention, and learning, especially in those who suffer from brain inflammation. The word nootropic comes from the Greek words noos and tropein which mean to guide thinking. These cognitive enhancers are tolerated well and excite the brain to assist the neurotransmitters in firing more efficiently, resulting in less haziness and more productivity. ([Source](#))

Nootropics encompass a diverse and broad class of medicine that crosses the blood–brain barrier, meaning the effects of these substances quite literally reach the brain. Vitamin B12 and L-theanine are two powerful nutrients that can alter the way you think. ([Source](#))

### **Supplement with B12**

B12 is needed for the proper functioning of the central nervous system and can be found in food sources such as fish, meat, poultry, and eggs. Some may have trouble absorbing this vitamin in the gut from diet alone due to methylation issues, or the process in which your body breaks down and distributes this vitamin. Supplementing with a more easily absorbable sublingual B12 may be helpful. ([Source](#))

### **Supplement with L-Theanine**

L-theanine is a plant compound found in green tea and helps to calm the mind without inducing sleepiness, so you can ride the waves of calm yet still be productive. This plant compound really increases focus and alertness — give it a try and see what you think! ([Source](#))



## 05 Engage in *Daily Movement*

No matter your age or what physical limitations you may have, daily movement can benefit your neurological health. Movement should include activities you enjoy that improve muscle strength and balance, increase energy and feel-good hormones, help you sleep more deeply, and feel better overall. Daily movement improves all aspects of your health and fights inflammation on a large scale. As you're moving, you're helping the glial cells in the brain release toxins and form new neural pathways that provide protection against neurological disease. Glial cells are a part of the glymphatic system, the central nervous system's version of the body's lymphatic system, necessary to clean out the build up of old debris and waste in the brain. Exercising can include so many varying sports and activities — check out our list of movement options (ranging from low intensity to high intensity) to get your lymphatic system flowing and get some fresh air! ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

### Movement Options

- biking
- swimming
- dancing
- skiing
- yoga
- pilates
- tai chi
- walking
- jogging
- rowing
- tennis
- soccer
- gardening

Movement may look different as you fit it to your schedule and needs each day. Even cleaning the house or chasing after your little ones is energy-expending! So give yourself grace and find ways to incorporate enjoyable movement into your day. Simply come up with a plan to make it part of your happy and healthy brain routine!



## 06 Support *Circadian Rhythms*

Have you ever noticed feeling not only physically but also mentally unbalanced when you don't get enough sleep? Your mind never completely shuts off, but it does need to rest and reset daily to function well neurologically and reduce inflammation. We are equipped with our own internal biological clocks, referred to as circadian rhythms, that dictate when we wake, are alert, and sleep in a 24 hour period. There are habits we can develop to support our circadian rhythms, as well as habits that do not. During sleep, our brains flush out toxic waste that has built up while we are awake. This time of mental purging is quite necessary. If you struggle to sleep well at night here are some tips to improve your rest as well as support your circadian rhythm:

- **Keep a consistent daily routine as best you can.** This can include eating around the same times each day, a regular bedtime routine, and rising each morning around the same time.
- **Keep a regular bedtime routine that includes turning off electronics,** (televisions, computers, phones, anything with artificial blue light) at least an hour before bed as well as keeping your room cool and dark, and finishing meals and snacks at least 2 hours before hitting the hay.
- **Manage how often you're exposed to artificial blue light** by not only turning off electronics before bed but by wearing blue light blocking glasses while on the computer or phone, and turning on the blue light blocker for your phone screen if it has one. Try getting some natural light in your eyes in the morning by going outside for a few moments. Managing to get more natural light in your eyes during the day and less artificial light at night will help reset those rhythms over time.

([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Last but not least, stress management will conclude our list of how to get rid of brain fog. Stress plays an important role in your overall health as the development of stress related disease has continued to rise over the years. The relationship between stress and inflammation is similar to the chicken and egg phenomenon in terms of what came first, and as they both play off of each other. Mild stress can be positive (it even has a name: eustress) and is necessary to promote growth and health in terms of meeting a deadline, exercising, or forcing us to think quickly or run away to stay safe. Chronic stress is when our system is constantly under attack, and inflammation stops being protective and starts being damaging. Managing your stress in today's world is difficult but necessary to protect brain health. If you're wondering how you can reduce stress here are some tips and behaviors to adopt:

- **Try breathing exercises.** Try the 4-7-8 method that was created by Dr. Andrew Weil. To begin, breathe in through your nose for four counts, hold the breath for 7 counts, and finally exhale out of your mouth for 8 counts. This can be practiced daily to train your body's response to stress.
- **Practice yoga.** Find a free class online or visit one in person with a friend, and stick with it. Yoga practice incorporates deep breathing techniques as well, so you will be checking off multiple stress reducing tips at once.
- **Stay hydrated.** Refer back to #3 on this list of why drinking water is important in neurological function and how to make it a habit.
- **Engage in daily movement.** Refer back to #5 on this list of why daily movement is important in neurological function and how to make it a habit.
- **Make time to meditate.** Find a quiet spot, get in a comfortable position, chill out with some breathing exercises for a few minutes, and simply *be*.
- **Get a massage.** Find a professional you are comfortable with (or enlist your partner) so you can relax those muscles and make space within to breathe comfortably.
- **Go outside.** Refer back to #6 on how to support your circadian rhythms, but also take a few moments to head outside no matter the weather and get some exercise, read a book, or simply play fetch with your pup.

([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

# The Relationship Between Sleep Deprivation and Brain Fog

---



We know that sleep is important for whole body health, but it is essential if you have autoimmune disease. Poor sleep, extreme fatigue, and not feeling rested after sleeping for long periods of time are all symptoms associated with an autoimmune diagnosis. However, there is some confusion in knowing if your sleep issues are contributing to your disease or are caused by it. Excessive sleep may not always be restful and restorative, but may instead lead to lack of mental clarity. Fatigue has been linked to excess inflammation, which increases the chance of immune system dysregulation. The lack of restorative rest over time may increase your risk of developing an autoimmune disorder later in life. Protect yourself and keep track of your sleep and wake cycles, supporting your circadian rhythms with the tips mentioned above. If you continue to feel greatly fatigued after full nights of sleep and notice additional indicators of autoimmune disease, do not hesitate to reach out to a practitioner who can help. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

# How to Get Rid of Brain Fog for Good

---



Clear thinking can belong to us all. Mental haziness can be a symptom of one or several underlying system imbalances, but paying close attention to your daily habits can bring this issue to an end as well as protect you from it happening in the future.

We all have off days, but protecting your smartest organ from mental decline is possible by adopting the healthy lifestyle habits mentioned above:

- eating an anti-inflammatory diet
- balancing your blood sugar
- staying hydrated
- supplementing with nootropics
- Incorporating movement
- supporting your circadian rhythms
- getting good sleep
- managing stress on a consistent basis

A good first step to getting rid of brain fog may be to follow an anti-inflammatory diet such as the autoimmune protocol. If you have been following this style of eating for some time and made lifestyle changes that have not impacted the status of your brain fog, or if you suspect it is autoimmune in nature, [WellTheory's Care Team](#) can provide you personalized nutrition and lifestyle support that provides relief from brain fog and [other autoimmune symptoms you may be experiencing.](#)

# Sources

Autoimmune Association. (2012, September 18). *Restful sleep and improving autoimmune symptoms*.  
<https://autoimmune.org/restful-sleep-autoimmune-symptoms/>

Bland, J. (2017). Defining *function* in the functional medicine model. *Integrative Medicine*, 16(1), 22–25.

Daniel, R. V., Sharma, G., & Chandra, S. (2022). Effective stress management through meditation: An electroencephalograph-based study. *International Journal of Yoga*, 15(1), 45–51.

[https://doi.org/10.4103/ijoy.ijoy\\_171\\_21](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijoy.ijoy_171_21)

Furman, D., Campisi, J., Verdin, E., Carrera-Bastos, P., Targ, S., Franceschi, C., Ferrucci, L., Gilroy, D. W., Fasano, A., Miller, G. W., Miller, A. H., Mantovani, A., Weyand, C. M., Barzilai, N., Goronzy, J. J., Rando, T. A., Effros, R. B., Lucia, A., Kleinstreuer, N., & Slavich, G. M. (2019). Chronic inflammation in the etiology of disease across the life span. *Nature Medicine*, 25(12), 1822–1832. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-019-0675-0>

Harvard Health Publishing. (2021, November 16). *Foods that fight inflammation*. Harvard Medical School.  
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/foods-that-fight-inflammation>

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (n.d.). *The importance of hydration*. Harvard University.  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/the-importance-of-hydration/>

Kverno K. (2021). Brain fog: A bit of clarity regarding etiology, prognosis, and treatment. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, 59(11), 9–13. <https://doi.org/10.3928/02793695-20211013-01>

Liu, Y. Z., Wang, Y. X., & Jiang, C. L. (2017). Inflammation: The common pathway of stress-related diseases. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 11, 316. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2017.00316>

Malík, M., & Tlustoš, P. (2022). Nootropics as cognitive enhancers: Types, dosage and side effects of smart drugs. *Nutrients*, 14(16), 3367. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14163367>

Mayo Clinic. (2022, October 12). *Water: how much should you drink every day?*  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256>

Mergenthaler, P., Lindauer, U., Dienel, G. A., & Meisel, A. (2013). Sugar for the brain: The role of glucose in physiological and pathological brain function. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 36(10), 587–597.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2013.07.001>



National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. (n.d.). *Massage therapy: what you need to know*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/massage-therapy-what-you-need-to-know>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. (2022, March 24). *Circadian rhythm disorders treatment*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/circadian-rhythm-disorders/treatment>

National Institute on Aging. (n.d.). *Real-life benefits of exercise and physical activity*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/real-life-benefits-exercise-and-physical-activity>

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. (2021, April 28). *Inflammation*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/inflammation/index.cfm>

National Institute of General Medical Sciences. (n.d.). *Circadian rhythms*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://nigms.nih.gov/education/fact-sheets/Pages/Circadian-Rhythms.aspx>

National Institutes of Health. (2013, October 17). *Brain may flush out toxins during sleep*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  
<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/brain-may-flush-out-toxins-during-sleep>

National Institutes of Health Covid-19 Research. (2022, August 30). *A possible mechanism behind brain fog*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  
<https://covid19.nih.gov/news-and-stories/a-possible-mechanism-behind-brain-fog>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (2022, 26 September). *Brain basics: Know your brain*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/public-education/brain-basics/brain-basics-know-your-brain>

National Library of Medicine National Center for Biotechnology Information. (n.d.). *Brain fog*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/medgen/5131>

NIH News In Health. (2012, January). *Breaking bad habits*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/01/breaking-bad-habits>

Nobre, A. C., Rao, A., & Owen, G. N. (2008). L-theanine, a natural constituent in tea, and its effect on mental state. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 17 (Suppl 1), 167–168. Retrieved December 15, 2022, from <https://apjcn.nhri.org.tw/server/APJCN/17%20Suppl%201/167.pdf>

Office of Dietary Supplements. (n.d.). *Vitamin B12*.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.

<https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminB12-HealthProfessional/>

Parshad, O. (2004). Role of yoga in stress management. *The West Indian Medical Journal*, 53(3), 191–194.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15352751/>

Russell, W. R., Baka, A., Björck, I., Delzenne, N., Gao, D., Griffiths, H. R., Hadjilucas, E., Juvonen, K., Lahtinen, S., Lansink, M., Loon, L. V., Mykkänen, H., Östman, E., Riccardi, G., Vinoy, S., & Weickert, M. O. (2016). Impact of diet composition on blood glucose regulation. *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 56(4), 541–590.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10408398.2013.792772>

Sears, B. (2015). Anti-inflammatory diets. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, 34(Suppl 1), 14–21.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07315724.2015.1080105>

Seo, D. Y., Heo, J. W., Ko, J. R., & Kwak, H. B. (2019). Exercise and neuroinflammation in health and disease.

*International Neuropsychology Journal*, 23(Suppl 2), S82–S92. <https://doi.org/10.5213/inj.1938214.107>

Theoharides, T. C., Stewart, J. M., Hatzigelaki, E., & Kolaitis, G. (2015). Brain “fog,” inflammation and obesity: Key aspects of neuropsychiatric disorders improved by luteolin. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 9, 225.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2015.00225>

Zielinski, M. R., & Gibbons, A. J. (2022). Neuroinflammation, sleep, and circadian rhythms. *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*, 12, 853096. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcimb.2022.853096>

Zielinski, M. R., Systrom, D. M., & Rose, N. R. (2019). Fatigue, sleep, and autoimmune and related disorders.

*Frontiers in Immunology*, 10, 1827. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2019.01827>

Zope, S. A., & Zope, R. A. (2013). Sudarshan kriya yoga: Breathing for health. *International Journal of Yoga*, 6(1), 4–10. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.105935>