

This presentation may be presented by one, two or more presenters. The narration area on the left of the script may be used to designate speaking roles and stage direction.

A Master format for a handout is attached for clubs to reproduce for a meeting presentation. Clubs are encouraged to be creative and share your outrageous ideas... think about it.

## Baby Boomers and BrainMinders

“Youth comes but once in a lifetime”  
that’s what Poet Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow once said...We are here to  
tell you the scientific advances being  
made every day, right this minute,  
could easily put Mr. Longfellow into  
shock!

In the early nineteen hundreds, just a  
century ago, the average life span  
peaked at about forty three years of  
age. Today the average life span is  
considered the mid-seventies. Very  
soon the nineties could be the new  
seventies.

The physical rejuvenation of the body, once unheard of... is pretty common place today. Thinning hair is a thing of the past... body parts are being replaced... Nips, tucks and libidos are on the rise. Staying young now requires physical and mental fitness. “Brain fitness is the new battleground on the anti-aging front.” a quote from the book “Brainfit” by Corinne Gediman and Francis M. Crinella, Ph.D. -

There are over seventy nine million baby boomers who are rapidly changing into senior boomers. They/we all want to know... what can be done to hold off the aging process and rejuvenate what we already have?

Modern science has answers and even more innovations in process.

Your brain started out as 100 billion active brain cells. Just a decade ago, scientists believed that the normal everyday loss of 100 thousand brain cells ... would eventually slide into an inevitable mental decline .

Science now knows that it is not the number of existing brain cells you have but the resiliency of your brain cells that contribute to a healthy brain.

While there are many theories about brain aging... scientists agree that cognitive decline is not due to normal brain cell loss.

Our best information tells us that lifestyle choices, which are under our control, can either slow down or hasten brain aging. Dr. Michael Restak in his book, “Mozart’s Brain and the Fighter Pilot” says, “throughout our lives the brain retains a high degree of plasticity

it changes in response to our experience.” He is not talking about play dough – it is about the flexibility of the brain to adapt with each of our experiences. If your experiences are rich and varied, the brain will develop a greater number of brain cell connections. If your experiences are dull and infrequent, the connections between brain cells will either never form or simply die-off.” Regularly exercising your brain can build a stronger, healthier, more alert, and active brain.

One of the earliest signs of brain aging in healthy adults is a change in memory.

Did you know... Memory actually peaks in our late twenties. More than 80 percent of physicians surveyed said

their patients - over the age of thirty complained of memory loss. Memory changes are perfectly normal ... what may seem to be memory loss could just be an inefficient brain. Usually it is those challenging short-term memories rather than those from your distant past. If you are curious there are many resources on the web with information about memory loss and ageing that may be quickly “Googled.”

The question most of us have on the tip of our tongue is how much memory loss is “normal” and what should we be aware of for more severe symptoms of memory loss? Here is a quick memory loss checklist from “Brainfit”

**Eight signs of early, usually benign, memory loss...**

- 1.** Occasionally having trouble finding the right word – “Oh, you know... um... that ... um... thing.”
- 2.** Momentarily blanking on the name of a friend or colleague. “I’d like you to meet my roommate... um... um...” ... you get the idea.
- 3.** Temporarily misplacing your keys or wallet. “They are always in the last place you put them.”
- 4.** Momentarily forgetting what day of the week it is. “It is especially confusing after one of those holiday weekends.”
- 5.** Forgetting once or twice to turn off the stove or water. “This can be worrisome if you just left on a two week vacation.”
- 6.** Forgetting an item on your to do list

This can be very frustrating especially if you don't remember where you left your to do list in the first place.

**7.** Forgetting an occasional meeting or appointment... uh, oh.

**8.** Not recognizing someone you met a long time ago... Of course, if they have lost their hair and gained sixty pounds... you can hardly be accountable.”

### **Eight signs of more severe memory loss**

**1.** Difficulty naming common objects... an example... “When I said-put it in that thing, I didn't mean the sink.”

**2.** Difficulty in understanding words... typically... “I'm sorry... I've never heard that before... what are you talking about?”

3. Substituting inappropriate words, making sentences unintelligible
4. Asking the same questions over and over... and over... and over. Three year olds also do this.
5. Putting common objects in inappropriate places like a shoe in a refrigerator and not recalling how it got there. Oops!
6. Forgetting important appointments repeatedly
7. Not knowing the current date, time or year
8. Getting lost on one's own street... not good.

**There are other changes that may indicate severe Memory Loss, such as...**

1. Rapid mood swings, sudden irritability for no apparent reason

2. An inability to perform common household chores... a house overcome with excessive garbage or dirt is often a sign of a mental disorder.

3. Noticeable confusion at home or in the workplace... for example, forgetting where the bedroom or bathroom is located.

4. An inability to perform tasks involving simple calculation, like balancing a checkbook.

Perhaps you breathed a sigh of relief... "I'm okay after all." Now, here's the question... would you wait until you could no longer lift a ten pound weight until you began a muscle mass rebuilding program? There is no need to wait until you recognize that your brain cells have begun to atrophy. Just

like your body, your brain can't exercise all by itself.

What are the best Brain Exercise activities? The brain thrives on novelty. The best brain fitness exercises are those that make us think and are enjoyable. Here are some good brain fitness activities from "Brainfit":

**Look for things that force you to think while doing them such as:**

- Assembling a model airplane
- Answering questions on a television quiz show
- Creating a new recipe from scratch
- Doing crossword puzzles, Sudoku, or brain teasers

**Investigate doing old things in new ways... think about:**

- Taking a new route home from work

- Brushing your teeth with the non-dominant hand
- Eating dinner with chopsticks

**Try learning new skills... such as:**

- Taking up a new hobby
- Learning a new language
- Learning a new software application
- Learning or relearning how to play a musical instrument

**Motivate your brain to try new ways of thinking**

such as...

- Writing poetry for the pleasure of weaving words and your thoughts together
- Try your hand at sculpting... many well-known sculptors started later in life.

- Drawing or painting a picture can be a very relaxing hobby with satisfying results.
- Writing your memoirs... this could become a history that is greatly appreciated by your children and grandchildren for generations.
- Reading a new type of book – perhaps instead of a murder/mystery... a book on ancient history.

### **Challenge your mind and body**

to things like...

*pantomime*  
*activities*

- Golf, tennis, skiing, etc
- Ballroom dancing
- Riding a bicycle
- Learn to drive a standard shift car

### **Social interaction also known as**

playing well with others- staying active

with your peers can almost guarantee a happy, alert brain.

- Try playing Bridge or learning other card games;
- Book club discussions can give you fascinating insights into other view points.
- Doing volunteer work – Pilot Clubs will certainly keep you active.
- Consider taking a class... many continuing education programs give you an opportunity to broaden your horizons through knowledge and friendships.
- Look for a play or lecture you can attend with a friend... Sharing the history of an event can be as rewarding as the information you received.

## **Consider the real value of physical exercise for pumping blood and nutrients to the Brain**

- You can start by walking briskly or jogging
- Walking or running on a treadmill is also a great time to read a book or challenge your mind
- Doing jumping jacks, just like you did in Phys Ed.
- Working out on an elliptical cross-trainer is a great brain workout too!
- Dancing... it's fun and good for you too!

We also have some quick, practical things you can do to wake your brain and keep it alert. Imagine in the morning waking up and your brain might feel a little bit fuzzy. Follow me or look at the back page of your

handout. Hold up both hands, palms facing – and curl your fingers as if you are going to catch a grapefruit. Holding that position... raise your hands – one on each side of your head 2-3 inches above your ears... now with the tips of your fingers tap either side of your head in a semi-circular motion from the crown of your head toward the base of your skull in the back of your head... over your ears and back to the crown of your head... do this at least six to ten times. This actually stimulates the circulation and helps to wake up those sleepy neurons. This a great little wake-up exercise.

Have you ever sat at your desk too long or had to drive for a long stretch? This can result in brain fog. Here is a practical exercise for helping you focus

on your tasks. Standing up straight... stretch... take a few deep breaths... now loosen your shoulders as if they were rubber bands, suddenly letting go...and hold either arm out in front of you, shoulder high, now point the opposite leg out in front of you so that opposite sides are out in front, next, switch sides swinging your arms and legs so you have the opposite effect. This looks a lot like what they call “goose stepping.” Slowly switch sides back and forth, swinging your arms as you go and speed up until you have done this about ten times. You should feel refreshed and ready to go on to complete your task. This helps both sides of your brain to focus for whole brain activity.

The bottom line for Baby Boomer Brains reads like this... you can work toward keeping your brain active and flexible. New experiences and a conscious effort on your part can increase and build new connections in your brain and improve quicker responses. You may want to investigate a brain exercise program based on the latest neuroscience research. It is called **“Keep Your Brain Alive”** 83

*Neurobic Exercises to help prevent memory loss and increase mental fitness* by Lawrence C. Katz, PhD, and Manning Rubin. It is an easy to read book and worthwhile investment.

These simple exercises help stimulate nutrients that help grow brain cells.

This can keep your brain younger and stronger. This book is recommended on your handout.

Finally, as you head into the sunset remember... vacations are good for you... your brain is making new maps, new information is plugging into your brain... Mindless television is bad for you... it actually dulls the brain and brain cells decrease because of lack of stimulation. Volunteer work is good for you because it builds your mind, body *and* spirit plus it adds new friendships and experiences.

Which brings me to... a word from our sponsor... **Pilot International**, of which I am a member. Pilot International is a non-profit community service organization. We believe in ***Protecting your Brain for Life*** and improving the ***quality of life*** in communities around the world. At the beginning of this new century our

organization was seventy nine years old and we chose to focus a signature program on education and the prevention of brain injuries and brain disorders. We named the program ***BrainMinders, Protecting Your Brain for Life.***

- **BrainMinders** is a very worthwhile program designed to educate from the cradle to the rocking chair.
- Brain injury is the leading cause of death among children and teenagers.
- We want young mothers to know how their baby's brain develops... how they can enrich that growth.
- We need children, from the age of three, to understand how

important it is to protect their brain.

- Teenagers should know why the brain growth during puberty contributes to their feelings of being misunderstood.
- Caregivers are hungry for information about brain disorders and how to cope effectively with their patients.
- Baby boomers need to know that it is not too late... a brain can be rejuvenated with new ideas and concepts.
- Senior citizens can benefit from programs designed to help them understand the changes in neural brain connections and how to maximize their brain functions.

All of these phases help protect the brain... they also save lives.

**Pilot International Foundation** helps our Pilot Clubs support **Project Lifesaver** in communities around the world. Pilot Clubs sponsor and pay for equipment and training for local law enforcement to help recover individuals suffering from the “wandering syndrome” – this is a very common symptom among Alzheimer’s, Autistic and brain injured patients.

Through our Pilot International Foundation... We provide Grants for communities... our members help underwrite a variety of community projects *and* we provide scholarships for students majoring in professions dealing with brain injury and brain disorders. Each year Pilot Clubs also work to financially assist the important research at St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

We have a handout designed to help you remember some of the information we shared with you today. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining or supporting our mission I will be happy to meet with you after this meeting or I invite you to visit our website at [www dot pilotinternational dot org](http://www.pilotinternational.org). This information is also in your handout.

Thank you very much for your time and interest. You are a most gracious audience and I/we appreciate your invitation allowing us to share our mission with you today... If we have time I/we will be happy to answer any questions.

