**Learn Something New**

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Most of what they told us in medical school about the brain . . . was wrong! Back then, the prevailing belief was that once we reached physical maturity, our brains ceased to make new brain tissue. We thought that aging gradually depleted the neurons of our brains, leading to dementia. Fortunately, that is not the case. We now know that our brains are not the static organs we once thought they were. They are actually dynamic and have the incredible potential for growing, rewiring and healing through neurogenesis (making new neurons) and neuroplasticity (building new neural pathways).

In fact, you can build new brain tissue and reduce the risk of dementia through physical activity, proper rest, a Mediterranean-type diet and by learning new things. That last one is critical … *learning new things*.

Think of the brain as a superhighway of interconnected roads (neural pathways). Each time we learn something new, messages travel like cars along these pathways, building stronger and faster connections to help us reach our destination. Keep doing it, and you’ve soon created a better, faster freeway to get there. But *stop* using that road, and eventually potholes develop and you won’t be able to get there as fast or at all. In order for neurogenesis to work, we must keep learning.