



David Fairlamb THE FIT FACTOR

FITNESS TIP

It's not about how hard you work or even the type of exercise you do, but making an effort to be more active on a consistent basis can help stave off dementia.

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

We can't change the genes we inherit but research shows that small positive changes to our lifestyle can still help to stack the odds in our favour in the fight against the risk of dementia.

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NEARLY everyone can lower their risk of dementia, even if it runs in the family, by living a healthy lifestyle, research suggests.

The team at the University of Exeter who led the study of nearly 200,000 people said the results were exciting, as it showed the risk fell by up to a third. The findings were revealed at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference.

There are still no drugs to change the course of dementia, so trying to reduce your chances is all you can do.

The study was based on a combination of each person's exercise, diet, alcohol and smoking which gave an overall lifestyle score.

Someone who scored well:

- Doesn't currently smoke;
- Cycles at normal pace for 2.5 hours a week;
- Eats a balanced diet that includes more than three portions of fruit and vegetables a day, eats fish twice a week and rarely eats processed meat;
- Drinks up to one pint of beer a day.

Someone who scored badly:

- Currently smokes regularly;
- Does no regular exercise;
- Eats a diet that includes less than three servings of fruit and vegetables a week, and includes two or more servings of processed meat and of red meat a week;
- Drinks at least three pints of beer a day.

The study followed 196,383 people from the age of 64 for about eight years. It analysed people's DNA to assess their genetic risk of developing the disease.

The study showed there were 18 cases of dementia per 1,000 people if they were born with high risk genes and then led an unhealthy lifestyle.

Change your life today – don't gamble on your future

Motivational quote of the day

But that went down to 11 per 1,000 people during the study if those high-risk people had a healthy lifestyle.

The figures might seem small, probably because mid-60s is relatively young in terms of dementia and the study applies to dementia in general, rather than specific forms of the disease like Alzheimer's or vascular dementia.

This is yet more evidence proving there are things we can all do to cut our risk of developing dementia, yet research suggests that only 34% of adults think this is possible. I have written hundreds of articles over the years and here is another proving that making small but significant changes to your day-to-day lifestyle can have a profoundly positive effect on your health over time.

Do not be that person who waited until encountering health issues before making better lifestyle choices. You need to be mindful now, in order to give yourself the best possible chance of living in good health and enjoying your life, continuing to do the things you want to do, for longer.

