

# Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting

The logo for Apollo Mechanical Contractors is contained within a dark blue oval. The word "Apollo" is written in a white, cursive script font. Below it, the words "MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS" are written in a white, sans-serif, all-caps font, flanked by two horizontal white lines. Underneath that, the tagline "Building People Who Build Great Things" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

— MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS —  
Building People Who Build Great Things

## Home Healthy - Home Safe

Date: January 2022

### Exercise Your Mind - Brain Health

To preserve your cognitive health, your best bet is to work out your body and your mind through regular exercise and mentally and socially stimulating activities. A study performed on 454 older adults who agreed to have an accelerometer to track their movement found those who were more active were 31% lower risk of developing dementia. Research completed by Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies found that yoga poses completed at least 10 minutes a day was proven to raise dopamine and GABA levels – both chemicals that are generally found to be low in individuals who suffer from some state of depression.

Give your brain a workout too. Research suggests that engaging in mentally stimulating activities, not just physical, helps build your cognitive reserve (the ability to withstand adverse brain changes before you exhibit symptoms).

#### 4 Ways to mentally stimulate your brain

1. **Play Games-** The following gaming activities have been medically proven to help develop and maintain healthy brain function; Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, chess, bridge, scrabble and Blokus.
2. **Dance** – Enjoy dancing? Any style? In a study of memory impaired older adults, those who attended one-hour ballroom dance lessons, twice a week, for 10 months improved in multiple areas of brain function as well as mood and behavior.
3. **Just Breathe-** 27 minutes per day of mindfulness (meditation/breathing) has proven to increase the density of gray matter in your hippocampus. Hippocampus is directly responsible for learning and memory, and it is the area of brain that shrinks in Alzheimer’s disease.
4. **Learn Something New** – New hobby. New sport. New language. New skill. Nothing improves brain health more than a challenging reoccurring stimulation brought on by challenging yourself with something new throughout the learning process. This process builds neurons and reinforces neuron receptors that help combat adverse effects of age and cognitive ability.

**HEALTHY OR SAFETY REMINDER:** Sleep is more important than we give it credit for. Individuals who average 5 hours or less of sleep are 35% more at risk for all cause mortality. But more isn't always better. Individuals who average over 10 hours of sleep a night, nearly double their risk (90% increase) of all cause mortality.

#### Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. Can you improve brain health throughout your life?
2. Does anyone want to share a hobby that you recently started?