

WORKING FROM HOME:

Ways to Enhance Focus & Concentration

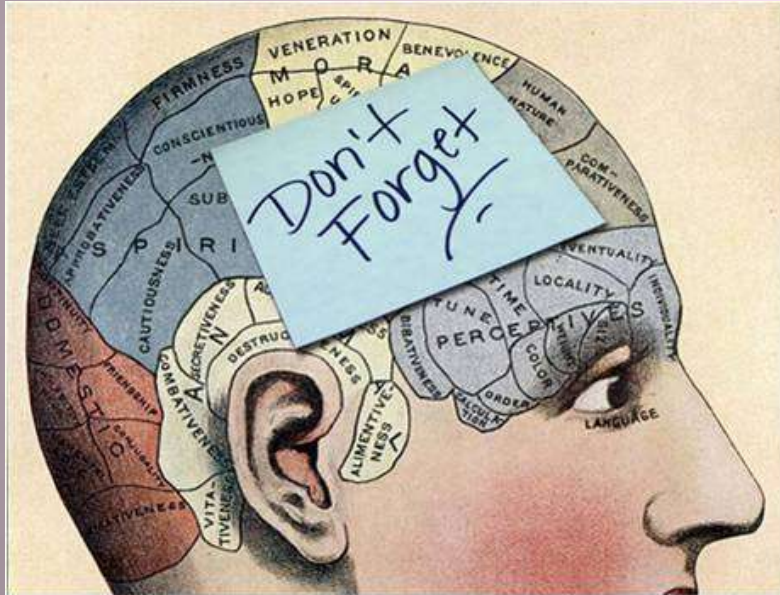
Valerie R. Vestal, MSN, PMHNP-BC

Chris Aiken, MD

MANAGING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WHEN WORKING FROM HOME:

- ⦿ Reduced accountability
- ⦿ Social isolation and disconnection
- ⦿ Difficult to set boundaries
- ⦿ Little support
- ⦿ Feeling Overwhelmed

Cognitive Problems



Attention

"I'm distracted, can't follow a movie."

Memory

"I forget what I went in the room for."

"Can't think of words."

"I repeat conversations... embarrassing!"

Executive

"I'm overwhelmed and don't know where to start."

"I'm impulsive." "I'm always late."

"My boss is so unfair, she keeps changing the rules on me."

Social

"I don't trust anyone"

"People are always criticizing me."



RESIST THE URGE TO STAY IN YOUR PJ'S

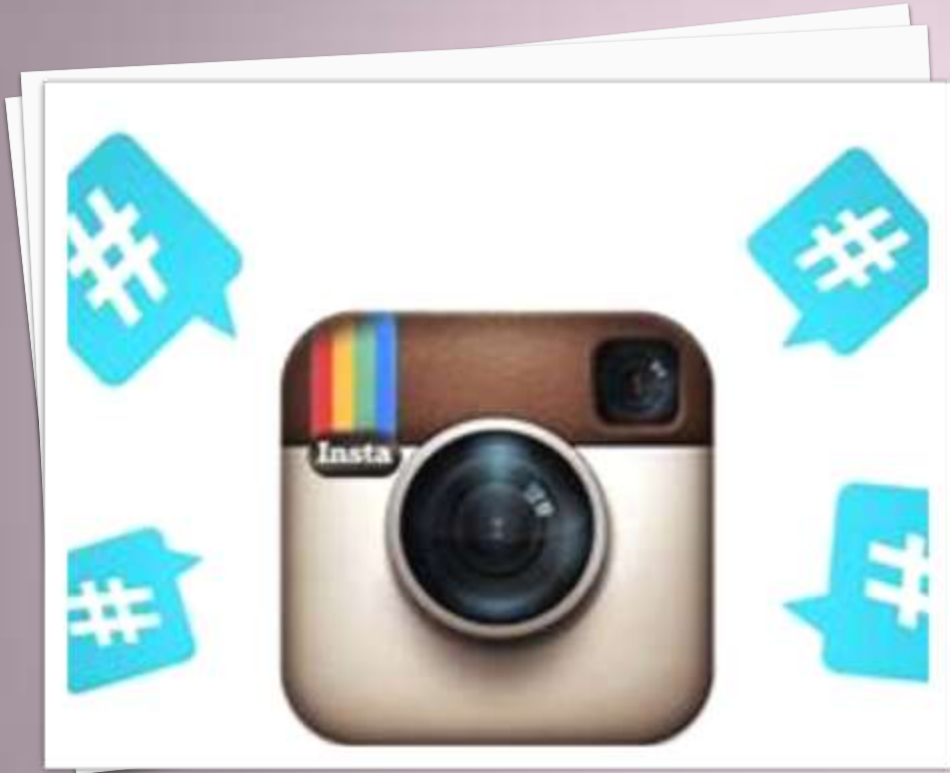
Make a point of getting dressed every day, just as if you were going to the office. Your clothing could be the factor that actually boosts your productivity and motivation

Have A Dedicated Work SPACE



TIPS FOR MINIMIZING DISTRACTIONS

- ◉ Wear noise cancelling headphones
- ◉ Use a white noise system
- ◉ Place sign on the door of
- ◉ Place phone away from work space
- ◉ Special ring tone for an aging parent or child



CONTROL SOCIAL MEDIA DISTRACTIONS

- Turn off notifications
- Set specific time to check email



ATTENTION

- Schedule difficult tasks for times when concentration is optimal

ATTENTION



- Drink water
- Build in simple rewards (chocolate, favorite websites)
- Exercise
- Find something personally relevant in the material

MEMORY

MEMORY AIDS

- Calendars
- Apps
- Alarms

DAILY JOURNAL

- To do list
- Appointments
- Important events

ORGANIZE

- Keep related things in the same place at home

MEMORY TRICKS

- Chunk information into smaller pieces
- Associate names with people you know, physical traits, or funny rhymes



CALENDARS

Top Picks

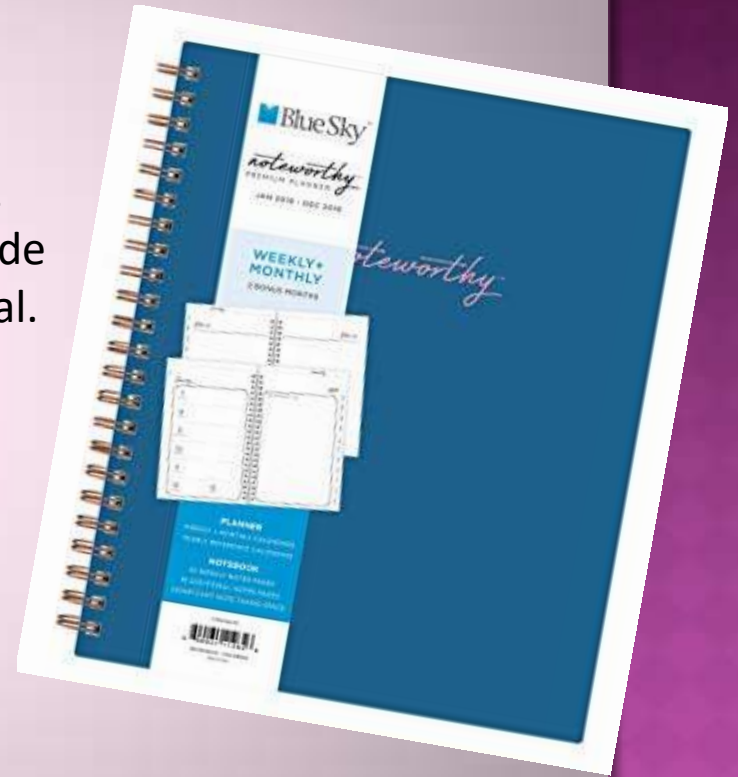
Simple Elephant Planner and Panda Planner.
Designed with mental health in mind, these include mood-boosting features like a gratitude journal.

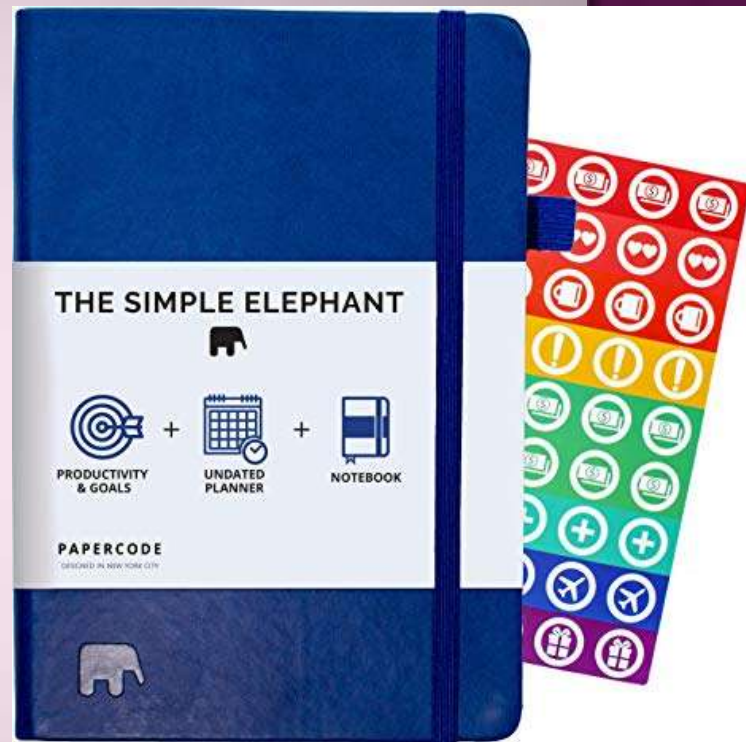
Simple, affordable options

Blue Sky, At-A-Glance®

Classic, professional look

Moleskin, Lemome, and Ink+Volt





PANDA PLANNER

WEEKLY



The weekly planner layout is divided into four main horizontal sections. From top to bottom: a 'REVIEW LAST WEEK' section with a grid for notes; a 'PLAN NEXT WEEK' section with a grid for daily planning; a 'PROJECTS' section with a grid for task breakdown; and a 'GOALS' section with a grid for goal tracking. Each section is highlighted with a dashed border and a callout box.

REVIEW LAST WEEK
Happily reflect on the best parts of last week and plan how to improve the not-so-great parts.

PLAN NEXT WEEK
Consciously decide how you're going to make the upcoming week your best yet!

PROJECTS
Break down all of your current projects into baby steps. These tasks become your top priorities in the Daily section.

GOALS
Crush your goals! Get more done by setting and hitting new goals each week!

DAILY



The daily planner layout is divided into four main horizontal sections. From top to bottom: a 'MORNING REVIEW' section with a grid for notes; a 'SCHEDULE/TASKS/NOTES' section with a grid for task scheduling; a 'PRIORITIES' section with a grid for task prioritization; and an 'END-OF-DAY REVIEW' section with a grid for daily reflection. Each section is highlighted with a dashed border and a callout box.

MORNING REVIEW
Cultivate happiness by focusing on the great things in your life! Develop positive habits like exercise and optimism-fast!

SCHEDULE/TASKS/NOTES
Manage your time like an expert with the Schedule! Check off your Tasks and use the Notes area for creativity or ideas!

PRIORITIES
Increase your efficiency by making sure your top 3-5 priorities get done first, everyday!

END-OF-DAY REVIEW
Train your brain to focus on what went well and how to improve, instead of on what went wrong.

TASK COMPLETION

BREAK IT DOWN

- Break complex tasks into smaller steps
- Prioritize each step

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Practice estimating how it will take to complete each step



Projects	Tasks
Navy	Renew certification Renew security clearance Create Health Promotions Notebook Write monthly email

Projects	Tasks
Renew Credentialing for Navy Reserve	Complete Personal Profile Find Collaborative Agreement Send in Collaborative Agreement Determine three colleagues to request a reference Ask colleague if they would be a reference and send Follow up with colleague to determine if they sent it Request case logs from my supervising physician Send in case logs

Date	Accomplishment	Next Action	Follow-up
02/03/2020	Sent AD request to be a reference	Wait for response	If no response in 48 hrs.
02/05/2020	Located collaborative agreement	Request supervising physician to update the date and signature	Follow up if no response in 48hrs
02/06/2020	Received my professional references.	Create a sub folder in my Navy Folder called Credentialing VV 2020 and add professional references to the folder	NA
02/07/2020	Completed Opioid training requirement	Add to Navy Credentialing folder	Follow up with physician regarding signed collaborative agreement

PROBLEM SOLVING

SLOW DOWN

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM

- What causes it or makes it persist?
- Who are the people involved?
- What is the desired outcome?

BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS

EDIT, RANK & IMPLEMENT

- Most likely to work
- Least likely to backfire
- Easiest to implement



No solution is too ridiculous

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on the floor in a living room, focused on her laptop. In the background, a young boy is standing on a sofa, and another child is jumping in the air near a large window. The room is bright and modern, with a wooden floor and a white coffee table. A yellow banner is overlaid on the image, containing the title and the names of the speakers.

Working from Home

Valerie Vestal, PMH-NP and Chris Aiken, MD

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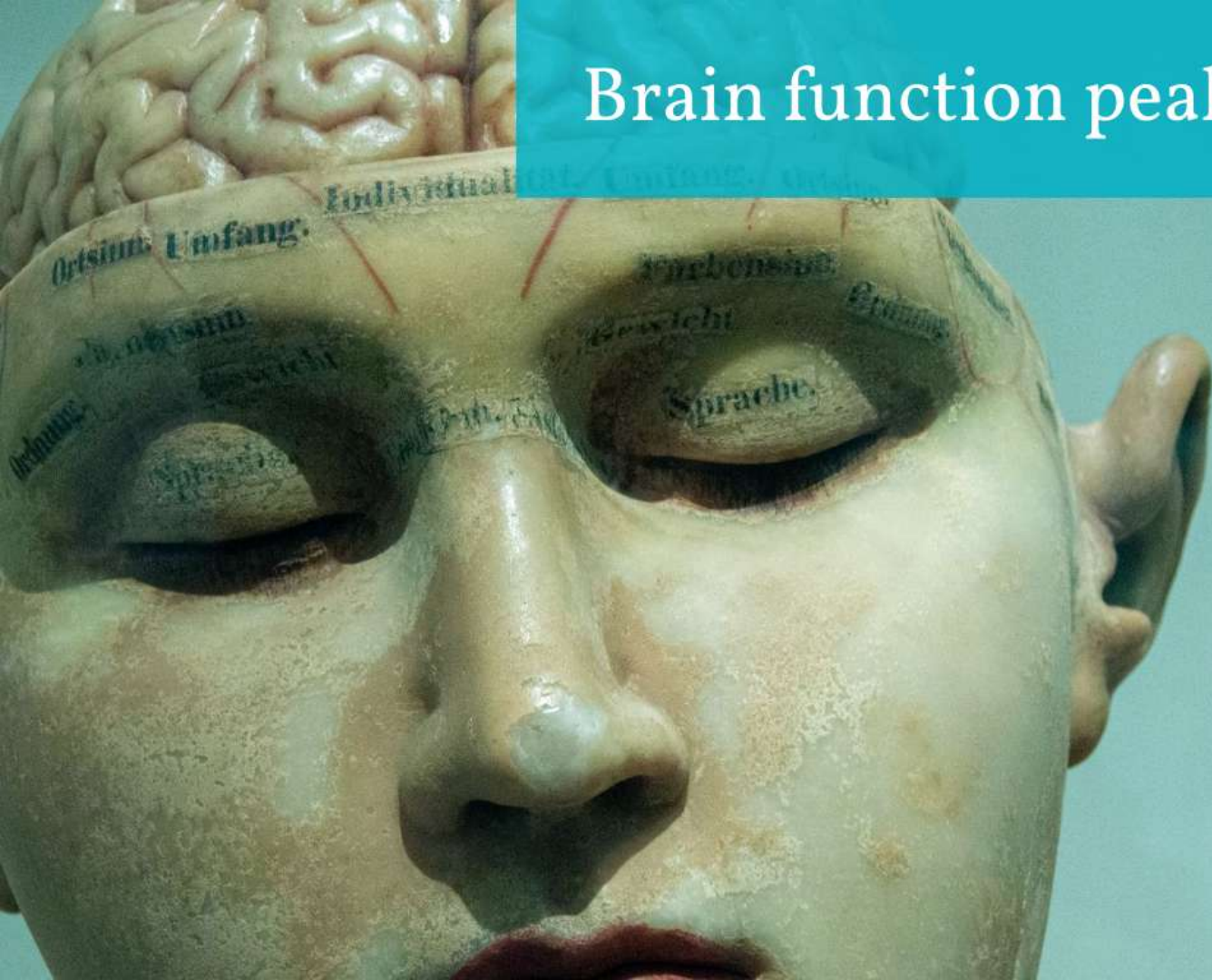
Carolina Behavioral Health Alliance

BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION



mood
treatment
center

Brain function peaks at age 35-45





Decline begins age 45.
The rate doubles after age 65.



The first to go

Multi-tasking

Remembering


conversations

recent events

to-do list

people's names

Not all bad news



Older adults do better at tasks that benefit from experience and judgment, like problem-solving



Check your health

If your cognitive problems are getting in the way, get a check for medical causes. Vitamin deficiency, hormonal imbalance, sleep apnea, psychiatric problems, low blood pressure, heart disease, and some medications can all cause memory problems.

Slow Down Cognitive Decline

1

Sleep

7-8 hours per night

2

Exercise

Brisk walking or light
aerobics 30 min a day

3

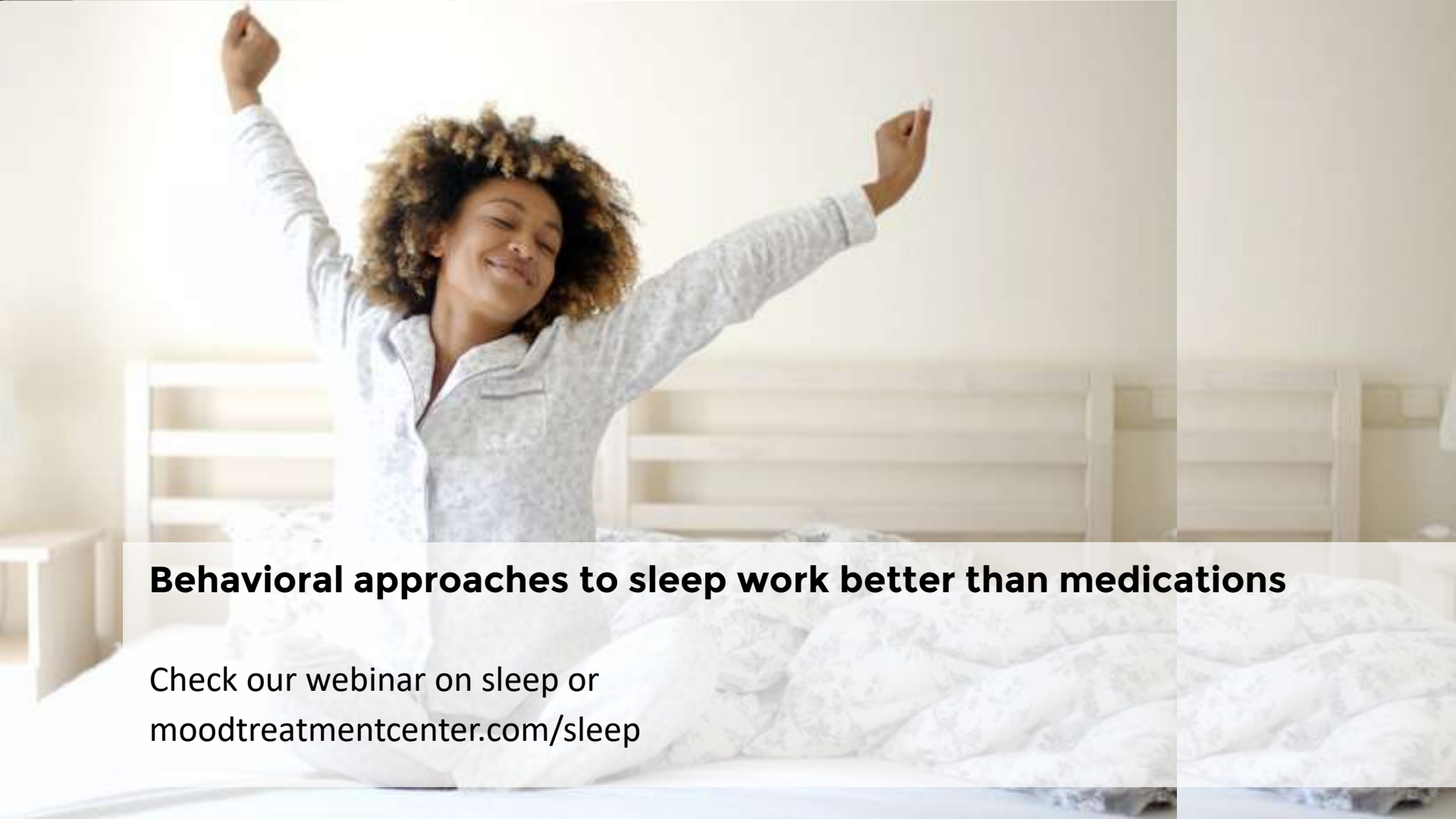
Eat Well

Mediterranean style. Fruits,
vegetables, nuts, lean meat,
whole grains, olive oil

4

Practice

Dexterity games like darts,
bowling, wii Sports. Puzzles,
memory and word games



Behavioral approaches to sleep work better than medications

Check our webinar on sleep or
moodtreatmentcenter.com/sleep

BRISK WALKING

45 minutes every other day of
light aerobics

(raise heart rate by 10 bpm)



CREATIVE AEROBICS

- Dance
- Play with kids or animals
- Cycling or stationary bike
- Treadmill in front of TV
- Swimming
- Active video games
(*Wii Sports, Just Dance, Island Run*)
- *Happy walk* at home video
- Or even better... In a forest



Island Run

A walk in the woods

**Improves focus
and attention
more than a walk
in the city or
suburbs.**

**Try 30-90 minute
walk at least 3
days a week.**





Office plants work too



Mediterranean diet

**Lowers the risk of
dementia by 50%**

Check www.moodtreatmentcenter.com/lifestyle or

Blueberries

A vibrant collage of fresh berries. The image features a mix of strawberries with green leaves, bright blue blueberries, red raspberries, and dark blackberries. The berries are scattered across the frame, creating a rich, colorful background.

A cup a day improved
memory in older adults after
1-2 months

Other berries help too



WII SPORTS

A VIDEO GAME FOR ADHD?



Research Based Brain Games

www.cognifit.com

www.brainhq.com

www.rehacom.us

Nintendo Wii Sports

Nintendo Big Brain Academy

DON'T LIKE DIGITAL?

KEEP IT REAL

- Playing cards
- Word games
- Sudoku
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Musical instruments
- Meaningful hobbies
- Book clubs
- Classes
- Social interactions



the
depression
and
bipolar
workbook

30 ways to lift your mood &
strengthen the brain

Chris Aiken, MD

Read More

2020 book includes chapter on the antidepressant diet, along with 30 other ways to improve mood and sharpen cognition



Support for the Front lines
health care workers in dangerous times

April 29 2:00 pm Virginia Love, LCSW and Ali Turner, LPC
moodtreatmentcenter.com/webinars