By Encarnacion Pyle

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That's why we need to eat well, get a good night's sleep and take other measures to rejuvenate, Rezai said. And it's never been more important, he said, to recharge our brains than now when people seem to be wired into technology 24/7.

"With cellphones, computers, gaming machines, tablets and TV, it's a constant onslaught of stimulation," he said.

Not controlled, the blue light emitted from electronic, "These 'always-on, always-connected' devices such as these can disrupt our circadian rhythm and jeopardize the restful sleep our brains so desperately need, he said.

Research suggests that the following may help you maintain your brain health:

1. Be physically active three times a week for at least 30 minutes

2. Eat a healthy diet of plants, while limiting the amount of red meat, dairy and saturated fat you consume

3. Keep your mind active by learning new things and being engaged socially

4. Maintain good heart health by quitting smoking, reducing alcohol and sodium intake and keeping healthy cholesterol levels

5. Protect your head from injuries by wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car and a helmet when cycling

While adding convenience to our lives and making us more productive, these "always-connected" devices have other drawbacks as well.

"Sometimes technology can make our brains lazy," said Dr. Janet Bay, a neurosurgeon and vice president and lead physician at Neurosurgery at OhioHealth.

Instead of figuring out how much you want to tip your waiter for dinner or how much you might look it up on your phone. Can't spell a word? Just ask Alexa or Siri.

People's increasingly hectic lifestyles and the rapid aging of the population — by 2050, more than 89 million Americans will be 65 or older — also makes it important to get a better understanding of the brain-body connection.

The average brain weighs about 3 pounds and comprises the cerebral cortex, which performs higher cognitive functions such as reasoning, planning, memory and sensory integration; the cerebellum, responsible for motor functions and balance; and the brain stem, dedicated to involuntary functions like breathing, heart rate and blood pressure.

To borrow a term from the computer world, the brain is the body's operating system, Rezai said. And while it is less than 2 percent of the body's weight, it uses 20 percent of the body's energy.

The majority of the energy consumed powers the rapid firing of millions of neurons that communicate with each other. Scientists believe much of the brain's energy gives rise to the brain's higher functioning.

While the notion is alluring that people employ just 10 percent of their brains and if they could only tap into the other 90 percent, Bay said, it's just a myth.

"Your brain is never silent and is always working in the background," she said.

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Your Good Health
Boost your brain
To optimize brain capacity, you need to rest and rejuvenate, experts say

Everyone knows what to do to keep their brain healthy. But what about the brain? While much of the brain remains a mystery, there is a growing movement to find ways to unlock brain potential so we can live healthier, perform better and延缓或避免通常延迟疾病的出现.

"Take Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, there's underlying brain degeneration going on for decades before there are any outward signs of it," said Dr. Ali Rezai, a neurosurgeon at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center.

"If we could detect these changes earlier, you would have more brain capacity to improve and could think about what you would change in your lifestyle," he said.

For these and other reasons, researchers are exploring various ways to measure, analyze and improve brain function, said Rezai who directs Ohio State's Neurological Institute and Center for Brain Health and Performance.

These techniques and discoveries will be used to help people manage factors that affect brain performance and find ways to help them rapidly replenish their neurocapacity as your cell phone's memory.

"Your brain is never silent — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — it's always working in the background," she said.

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