



TOOL 3



# START SMALL

Weekly tips to support your brain health.

This toolkit was created by a team of experts at the University of California, San Francisco and the University of Southern California. It is supported by the California Department of Public Health, Alzheimer's Disease Program. © 2024, funded under contract #23-10608.

**We're also online. Go to [BrainHealthToolkit.com](https://BrainHealthToolkit.com) for the digital toolkit and to learn more.**

Reuse or recycle.  
Pass on to a friend  
or recycle the paper.



# Instructions

There are many ways to support your brain health. These cards offer simple tips to try.

Here are 52 tips – one for each week of the year. We hope you'll discover what healthy habits work for you.

At the end of each week, write on the blank card to make note of how it's going.

## *Start Small* means :

Seeing which tips make you feel good. Pick and choose what works for you.

Put these tips somewhere you're likely to remember them – on your desk, counter, or nightstand.



# Get ready to ...

*Learn  
new  
things*



*Prioritize  
Sleep*



*Move  
your  
body*

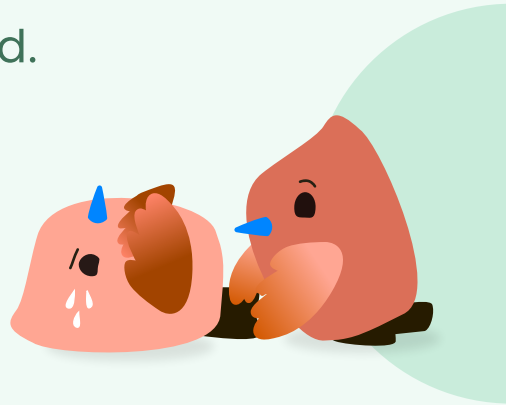


*Connect  
with  
others*



# Move

Exercise with a friend.  
You can keep  
each other going.



HOW WAS WEEK 1?

# Sleep

Try taking a few slow, deep breaths as you wind down for sleep.



HOW WAS WEEK 2?

# Connect

Write a postcard to someone you know, even from your home city. Everyone loves getting mail.



## Challenge

Go long form. Write a letter instead.

HOW WAS WEEK 3?

# Learn

Try birdwatching.  
Find out what types  
of birds visit your  
yard or local park.



HOW WAS WEEK 4?

# 1 month down!

Keep going,  
you're on a roll.



HOW DID IT GO THIS MONTH?



# Move

Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.



## Challenge

Offer to walk your neighbor's dog, or volunteer at the shelter.

HOW WAS WEEK 5?

# Connect

Get your hearing checked. It's important for keeping up with your friends and family.



HOW WAS WEEK 6?

# Learn

Make music. Learn the lyrics to a new song, or dust off your old instrument.



## Challenge

Write a song for your friend, neighbor, or pet.

HOW WAS WEEK 7?

# Move

Do yard work, or help clean up a local park.



HOW WAS WEEK 8?

# Sleep

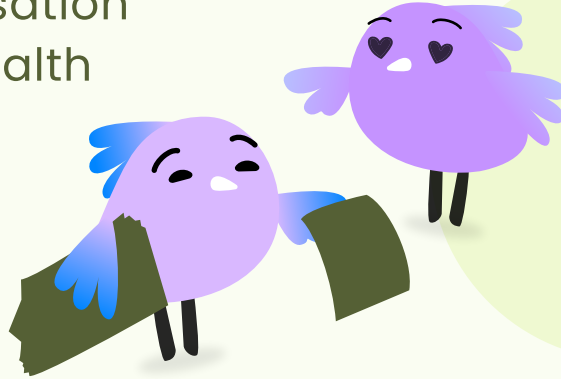
Replace your TV or screen time with a book, magazine, or hot shower.



HOW WAS WEEK 9?

# Connect

Start a conversation about brain health with someone you trust.



HOW WAS WEEK 10?

# Learn

Is there a hobby  
you've always  
wanted to pick up?  
Now's the time.



HOW WAS WEEK 11?

# Move

Try swimming or water aerobics at your local pool.



## Challenge

Ask a friend to go to the pool with you or sign up for a group class.

HOW WAS WEEK 12?



# 3 months of loving your brain!

Go at your own pace. Learn what works for you, and what doesn't.



HOW DID IT GO THIS MONTH?

# Sleep

Write your worries down before bed. It can help quiet your thoughts.



HOW WAS WEEK 13?

# Connect

Call up an old friend to reconnect. It feels good to hear a familiar voice.



HOW WAS WEEK 14?

# Learn

Explore a cookbook or cooking website and try a new recipe.



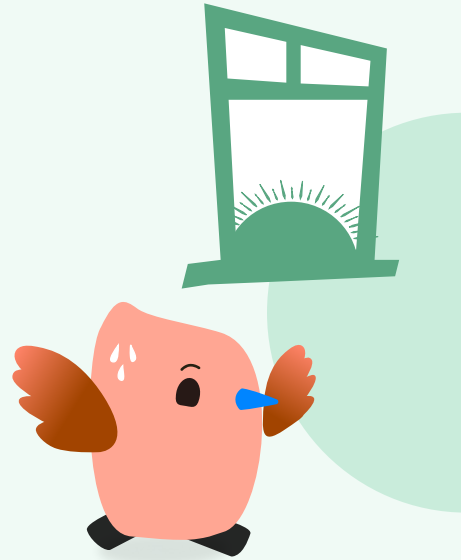
## Challenge

Pick a recipe with an ingredient you've never used before.

HOW WAS WEEK 15?

# Move

Set a reminder to get up and move at least once an hour. Exercise doesn't have to happen all at once.



HOW WAS WEEK 16?

# Sleep

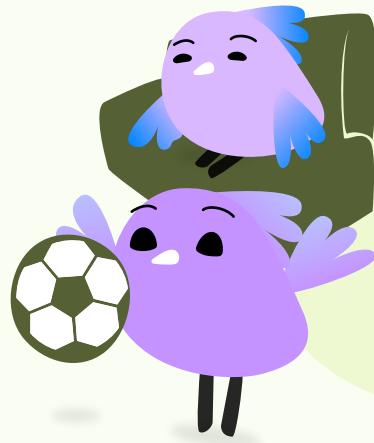
Do you snore?  
Talk to your doctor  
about it. It could be  
a sign of poor sleep.



HOW WAS WEEK 17?

# Connect

Invite a friend  
to watch your  
favorite TV show  
or a sports game.



HOW WAS WEEK 18?

# Move

Test your balance. Stand on one foot for at least 10 seconds.



## Challenge

Practice your balance by trying a simple yoga video.

HOW WAS WEEK 19?



# Sleep

Try not eating or drinking alcohol at least two hours before bed to help you sleep more soundly.



HOW WAS WEEK 20?

# Learn

Watch an online course or read a book from home. You pick the subject.



HOW WAS WEEK 21?

# Move

Take a long walk outside.  
Notice the different sights and sounds  
you see and hear.



## Challenge

Try walking briskly for at least  
20 minutes every day.

HOW WAS WEEK 22?

# Sleep

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends.



HOW WAS WEEK 23?

# Connect

A short chat can make a difference. Ask the store clerk about their day, or greet your mail carrier.



HOW WAS WEEK 24?

# 6 months down!

What are you,  
an expert or  
something? :)



HOW HAVE THE PAST 6 MONTHS BEEN?

# Learn

Teach a friend how to play your favorite card game.



## Challenge

Look up events at your local library. Find one you'd like to attend.

HOW WAS WEEK 25?

## Learn

Learning a language is good for your brain. Use an app, attend a class, or practice with a friend.



HOW WAS WEEK 26?



# Move

Put on a song and dance to it, any way you like.



## Challenge

Try to dance for at least 5 minutes without stopping.

HOW WAS WEEK 27?

# Sleep

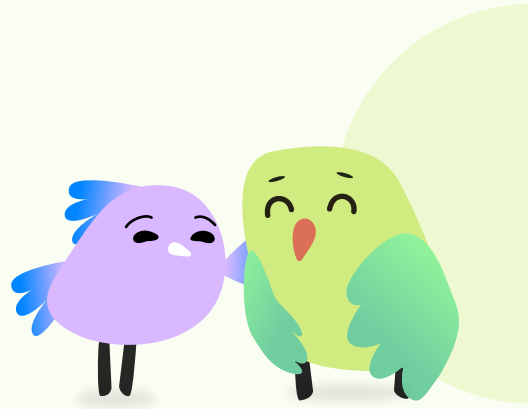
Listen to soothing music at night to help you drift off.



HOW WAS WEEK 28?

# Connect

Check out your local community or senior center. Invite a friend, or go to make new ones.



HOW WAS WEEK 29?

# Learn

Write down one of your favorite memories.



## Challenge

Write a haiku poem. It's just three lines.  
5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables.

HOW WAS WEEK 30?

# Move

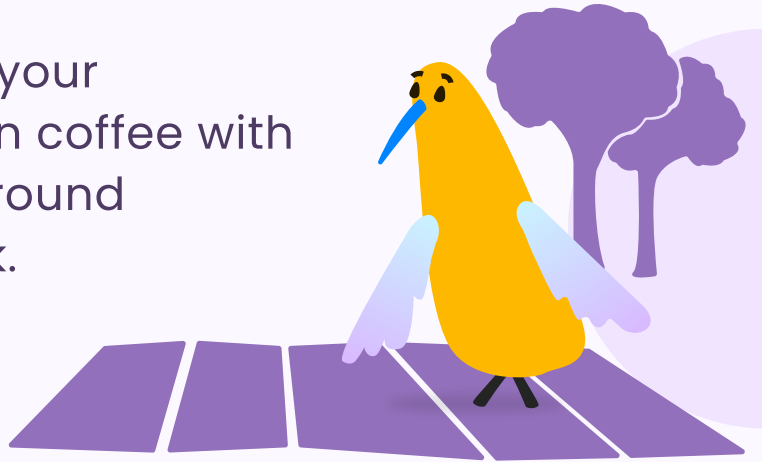
Build strength with household items. Try bicep curls with cans of food or a water bottle.



HOW WAS WEEK 31?

# Sleep

Replace your afternoon coffee with a walk around the block.



HOW WAS WEEK 32?

# Connect

Run errands with a friend or family member. Go to the grocery store or market together.



HOW WAS WEEK 33?

# Learn

Drop in on an adult education class at your local community center.



## Challenge

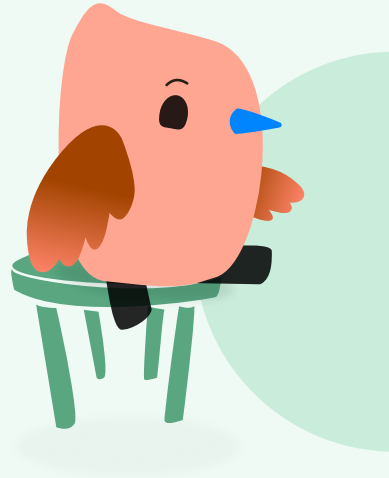
Find a class at your local community college and sign up for it.

HOW WAS WEEK 34?



# Move

Do some leg lifts  
while sitting at  
the breakfast table.



HOW WAS WEEK 35?

# Sleep

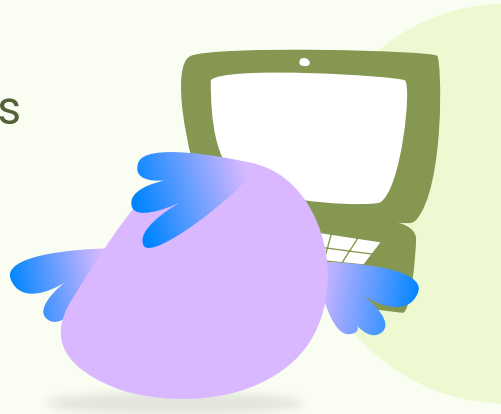
Wind down with  
a cup of herbal tea.



HOW WAS WEEK 36?

# Connect

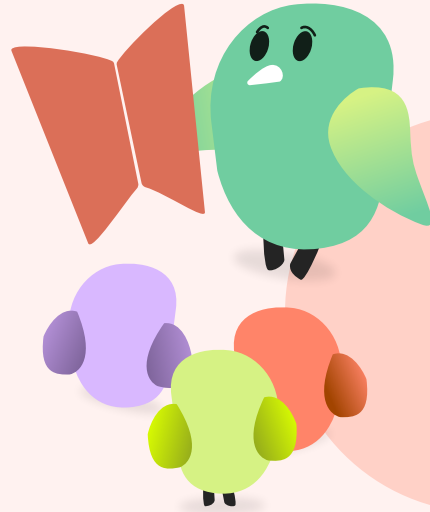
Host a video chat "reunion" with friends who live in different time zones.



HOW WAS WEEK 37?

# Learn

Volunteer as a tutor at your local library. One great way to learn is to teach.



HOW WAS WEEK 38?

# Move

Take photos of interesting things you notice on your daily walks.



## Challenge

Pick a new theme for your photos each week.

HOW WAS WEEK 39?

# Sleep

Get some natural light during the day. It helps you feel sleepy at night.



HOW WAS WEEK 40?

## 40 weeks ...

Didn't try  
all 40 tips?  
You're still making  
great progress.



HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

# Connect

Say hi to a neighbor, or share from your kitchen or garden.



## Challenge

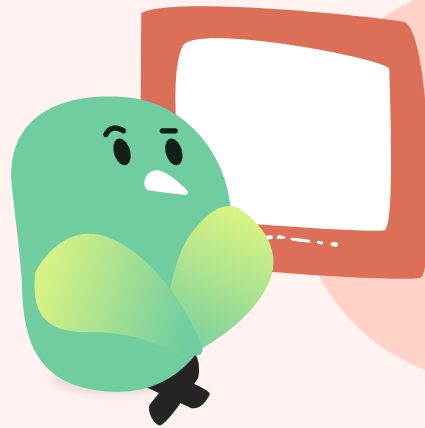
Plan a block party or potluck together.

HOW WAS WEEK 41?



# Learn

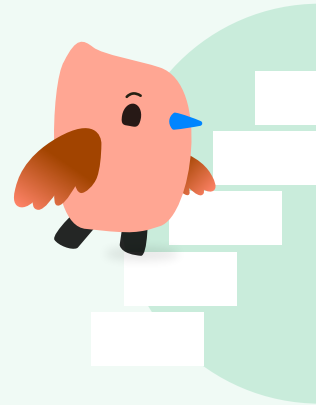
Stream a new documentary, or borrow it from the library.



HOW WAS WEEK 42?

# Move

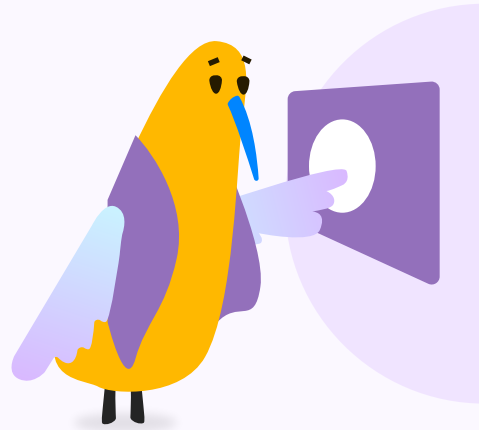
Park further away than you normally would at the grocery store, or take stairs instead of the elevator.



HOW WAS WEEK 43?

# Sleep

Try lowering your bedroom temperature or opening a window. Most people sleep better when it's cooler.



HOW WAS WEEK 44?

# Connect

Build your family tree, on paper or online. You might connect with a distant relative.



## Challenge

Get your siblings or cousins in on it, too.

HOW WAS WEEK 45?

# Learn

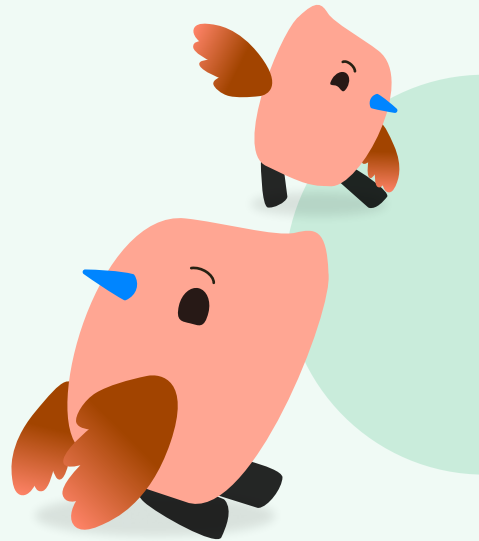
Read about  
a historical event  
that has always  
interested you.



HOW WAS WEEK 46?

# Move

Try stretching  
before bed and  
when you wake up.



HOW WAS WEEK 47?

# Sleep

Read a book for 15 minutes before bed.



## Challenge

Read for another 15 minutes in the morning before rushing into your day.

HOW WAS WEEK 48?

# Connect

Check out the checkers or chess-playing scene at your local park. See who is up for a match.



HOW WAS WEEK 49?



# Connect

Get silly with a friend.  
Laughter is great medicine.



## Challenge

Come up with a new joke and test it out.

HOW WAS WEEK 50?

# Move

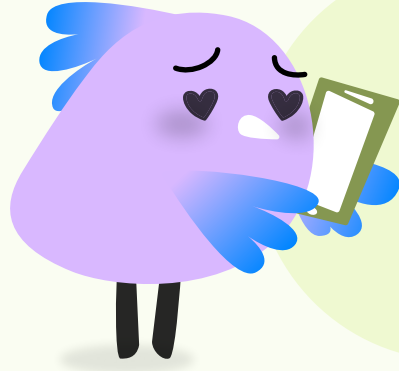
Sweep and scrub your house or apartment. Use some elbow grease to get your heart rate up.



HOW WAS WEEK 51?

# Connect

Practice gratitude.  
Say thank you  
to someone  
who supports you.



HOW WAS WEEK 52?

# Take a proper bow.

One whole year  
of building  
healthy habits!



HOW DID THIS JOURNEY FEEL?