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Five Nutrition Mistakes Women Make. Author & Award winner Nicki Anderson shares these 5 (and more) in this [radio interview](#). Time to take out the Carbage!



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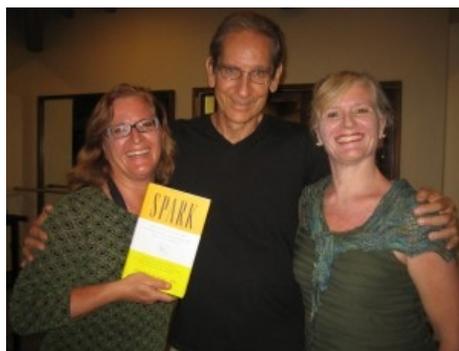


[Spark Your Brain with Exercise](#)

SEPTEMBER 17, 2012

Kymberly Williams-Evans, MA

Get a sparkling life and brain via cardio workouts



We let go of him once he autographed my book.

Talk about good luck and great timing! Within minutes of arriving at [Rancho la Puerta Fitness Resort](#) we were seated for dinner next to none other than **SUPERSTAAAAH, Dr. John Ratey**. If you read [Alexandra's post from August 2012](#), you'll know we drove 6 hours to the ranch specifically to hear Dr. Ratey speak in person. After all, he is THE expert on the connection between movement and mental power. After reading his book, "[Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain](#)," I was eager to learn even more about how we can affect our cognitive skills via activity. (Plus I wanted my book



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autographed.) And who ends up getting seated inches from me but “John.” EEEEEkkkk, groupie moment. Let’s get smarter as we progress through life!

So what news about **boosting your brain through exercise** did we glean from our brush with an intellectual celebrity?

1) Exercise is the Number One Youthener

(Ok, Dr. Ratey actually said “anti-aging,” but we are not against aging. We are for **aging as actively** as possible, so I reworded the phrase. Literary license, people!). Dr. Ratey stressed this heavily in his book and presentation: **nothing compares to the effect of movement** when it comes to living life “younger” as **nothing makes our brain cells work harder than exercise.**



Chasing down Dr. Ratey to sit with him again for dinner counts as cardio, right?

2) Motivate yourself with the knowledge that Exercise Offers Immediate Results

While we may not see results right away from our workouts, we reap MENTAL benefits **within moments**. The super important neurotransmitter is BDNF — Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor. **BDNF activates learning when we perform cardio.** As Dr. Ratey (aka, my BFF and dinner buddy “John”) says, “BDNF is a crucial biological **link between thought, emotions, and movement.** Our neurotransmitters offer ‘cerebellum training’ during and after each aerobic bout.” That clear-headed feeling we get from working out is literally a head full of enhanced brain power and activity. Dr. Ratey offered this “insta-result” fact as a **way to motivate ourselves to move more.**

3) Challenge Yourself Every Day in Some Way



New experiences and challenges enhance our cognitive skills (be smarter, stave off the odds of dementia, keep our memory strong, add brain matter and circuitry throughout life).

Maybe we take a walk that does left instead of

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MoonSTRUCK or MoonSTUCK? Either way, Snap Out of Routines

right; or we change up our morning routine somehow. Perhaps we add intensity or complexity to an action we are already performing. Apparently the experiences we can create for ourselves to stay mentally strong do not have to be huge or entirely new. **Even small challenges rewire our brains for the better.** If you are in a workout rut, snap out of it (to quote Cher's character in *Moonstruck*).

4) Find a Way to Inject Play into Exercise

All mammals play, so the more we can **bring joy and playfulness into our workouts**, the better off our brains will be. At the very least, **play reduces stress**. Lower chronic stress levels are related to a healthier life and stronger brain. In short, **make exercise fun**. Does this mantra from Fun and Fit sound familiar? If your current routine A) doesn't exist; B) is not fun; C) *is* ho-hum routine, then **challenge yourself to try new activities until**

you find the ones you enjoy.

Like how you can combine tips 3 and 4 here?

Those were the highlights from Dr. Ratey's talk. If you are keen to get even more keen, read *Spark*, ideally right after working out... at [Rancho la Puerta!](#) That would be a really smart move!

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Did someone say "play with Raaaa - taaaaay?"

