

How can we reduce our risk for Alzheimer's
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but only relying on Sudoku to challenge the brain just makes you good at Sudoku. These small challenges encourage new neural connections and mental flexibility.

Enjoy social activity

Staying socially active isn't just about having fun — it's a crucial part of brain health. Studies consistently show that people who maintain strong social ties are less likely to experience cognitive decline than those who are isolated.

Loneliness and social isolation have been linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and dementia. And it can be a vicious cycle. Often, when an individual starts displaying symptoms more prominently, such as having a lack of interest in their usual activities, are unable to carry a conversation, or their behavior changes, friends and family may distance themselves. They don't know how to respond or don't want to engage.

That's why our Beyond the Medical Center programs at the Smith Alzheimer's Center appeal not only to those with memory loss, but their loved ones as well. No matter who you are, finding activities where you can enjoy with other people is beneficial.

To make an appointment at the Smith Alzheimer's Center's Memory Clinic, call 217.545.8000. To learn more about the Smith Alzheimer's Center at SIU Medicine, visit our website siumed.org/alz.



Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois
Foot Tips for Smartwatch Users

Article provided by the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois

Not too long ago, it was common for seniors to take a stroll in the park after dinner to help walk off some calories. Today, the "casual stroll in the park" has been transformed into a healthy brisk walk monitored by smart-watches to track distance, control pace, and to monitor heart rate and calorie burn.

It is estimated that one in five Americans are wearing smart-watches for fitness and health purposes. According to Dr. John Sigle, a leading foot and ankle surgeon in the central Illinois, "The digital revolution is definitely helping people enhance their health and fitness routines. People appear to be walking with greater intensity and purpose now."

Research indicates that seniors who exercise and walk during the week are less likely to become disabled and tend to have better health outcomes.

"We encourage our patients to use these devices and to start smart by starting small," said Dr. Sigle.

Here are some helpful tips to those of you who are eager to launch a fitness program this spring:

- Don't rush into fitness. A modified approach will help you avoid injuries like shin splints, Plantar Fasciitis (heel pain), ankle sprains, and Turf Toe.
- Avoid walking or running on uneven surfaces and terrain and incorporate cross-training into your fitness program to reduce stress on your feet.
- Fitness activities can take a toll on your feet when you begin workouts and cause aches and pains. If pain persists it is a signal that you should consult your podiatrist for a diagnosis and treatment to prevent further injury.
- The majority of foot and ankle problems can be treated conservatively and resolved with simple adjustments like changing shoes and socks or using shoe inserts and pads. Minor adjustments will help prevent blisters, corns, and calluses. They can also help relieve any aches and pains in your legs, knees, and hips.
- Proper foot hygiene is essential to avoid problems. Trim

your toenails properly and regularly. Keep your feet clean and dry and inspect them on a regular basis.

- Foot blisters, nerve compression foot injuries, stress fractures of the lower leg, foot and ankle should be examined by a podiatrist. This includes foot infections, ingrown toenails, and toenail fungus.

If you intend to increase your fitness activities this spring, it may be a good idea to consult with your physician or podiatrist. This is especially important if you are overweight or obese, have diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, or peripheral artery disease. Get a proper foot screening to determine if you are at risk.

According to Dr. Sigle, "Don't be afraid to incorporate smart devices into your workouts. They can be a wonderful source of motivation to reach your goals and live a healthier lifestyle."

Contact the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois at (217)787-2700 if you experience pain and discomfort in your feet. Don't let foot pain slow you down. Visit myfootandanklecenter.com for more information or to make an appointment on-line. Patients are usually seen within twenty-four hours and most insurance plans are accepted. The Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois is conveniently located in Springfield, Decatur, Shelbyville, and Carlinville.

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