

stay healthy

NEWS & TIPS FOR FEELING YOUR BEST



SHAINA FISHMAN

SOCIAL CREATURES

• If you're looking to get more involved in your community, start by making a new four-legged friend. People who interact with animals on a consistent basis are more likely to feel connected to their neighborhood and, in turn, participate in local volunteer opportunities, suggests new research from Tufts University in Medford, Mass. Find out where to bond with cuddly quadrupeds near you at volunteermatch.org. —T.K. BRADY

THOUGHT PROCESS

STAYING IN TOP FORM

matters to your brain as much as your body—a principle deeply ingrained in the philosophy of health and wellness resort Canyon Ranch. But even if you can't escape to one of its four luxe locations, you can boost your mental skills with the center's new book, *30 Days to a Better Brain* (\$25, amazon.com). Author and Canyon Ranch president Richard Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., previews three of his favorite tips:

CHECK YOUR EYES

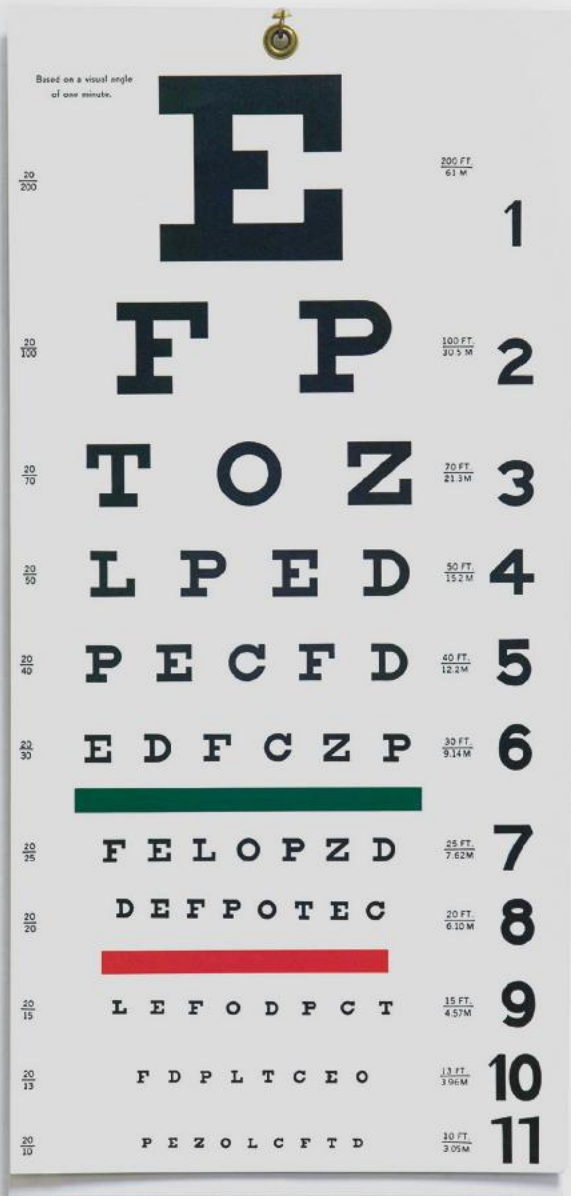
- Your peepers play a key role in brain health. Getting an ocular exam, in addition to your yearly physical, can offer important insight into your overall wellness. An ophthalmologist will be able to diagnose blood flow issues, cataracts and vision loss, which could all be related to brain function.

AMP UP YOUR EXERCISE

- Instead of hopping on the treadmill, where it's easy to zone out, opt for an aerobic session that demands total concentration—like rock climbing or Zumba. You'll be so focused on finding the handhold or learning the steps that your mind won't have time to wander or worry.

PLAY GAMES

- You don't have to feel bad about that gaming habit. Turns out, challenging your mind to complete puzzle levels or memory sequences can enhance neuroplasticity, which in turn improves your mental acuity. Carmona particularly likes those created by Posit Science (positscience.com). — T.K.B.



Safer Sex

Talk about a mood killer: Many latex condoms contain carcinogens called nitrosamines, a by-product of the manufacturing process. But **Sustain** condoms (sustaincondoms.com), to be released early June, are made using a special technique to bypass nitrosamines—without sacrificing quality. Developed by Seventh Generation founder Jeffrey Hollender and his 26-year-old daughter, Meika, the company uses latex from a Fair Trade Rubber Association-certified plantation in Southern India, where it pays laborers a living wage and provides education and health care for the entire community. Health and humanity? That's one hot coupling!

— HANNAH WALLACE

GOOD POINT! Acupuncture can help with everything from infertility to insomnia, but before you submit to a poking, ask your practitioner what needles he wields—poor-quality ones can cause bruising or pain, a new study cautions. Japanese needles tend to be a bit more expensive, but are smoother and generally of better quality than Chinese needles, according to Dr. Mike Cummings, acupuncture expert and medical director of the British Medical Acupuncture Society. Puncture problem, solved. — T.K.B.