

## **+TREAT UNDERLYING BARRIERS**

### **TREAT UNDERLYING BARRIERS TO JUMP START YOUR SUCCESS**

*Tips for Success Despite ADD, Anxiety, Depression, Brain Injuries*

**By Daniel G. Amen, MD**

Did you know that having untreated (or under-treated) Attention Deficit Disorder, anxiety, depression, or a past brain injury can hold you back and keep you from losing weight and getting healthy?

If you've been doing your best to follow The Daniel Plan but have been having trouble sticking with it or haven't been seeing the results your friends are experiencing, it may be time to think about how your mental health could be affecting your efforts.

Here are some of the ways that very common mental disorders, which are actually brain disorders, can trip you up. Plus, I will give you some very simple things you can do to help you get control of these problems.

#### **ATTENTION-DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD)**

Research suggests that having untreated ADD nearly **DOUBLES** the risk for being overweight. Without proper treatment, it is nearly impossible for people with ADD to be consistent with any nutrition plan. They tend to be impulsive overeaters who start every day with good intentions but cave-in to their cravings the minute they see the doughnuts at church.

Based on our brain-imaging work, we have found that ADD is associated with decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex (PFC).

The PFC is the part of the brain associated with being able to stick with The Daniel Plan, including:

- › Planning
- › Judgment
- › Impulse control
- › Follow-through

People with ADD struggle with:

- › Short attention span
- › Easily distracted
- › Disorganization
- › Impulsiveness

My research team and I have published several studies showing that when people with ADD try to concentrate, they actually get less activity in the prefrontal cortex, which will cause them to have even **LESS** control over their own behavior. For these people, literally, the harder they try to lose weight, the worse it gets.

Here are natural ways to reduce impulsive behavior:

- › Higher-protein diets: This helps increase focus.
- › LOTS of exercise: Get at least 30 minutes every day to increase blood flow and dopamine in the brain.
- › Clear focus: Use your One-Page Miracle.
- › Supplements: Green tea, rhodiola, and l-tyrosine (found in Dr. Amen's Focus & Energy Optimizer).

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### **ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION**

A new wave of scientific research has found a strong link between depression and an increased risk for obesity, and in particular a greater amount of belly fat. A 2010 study found that people with high levels of depression gained weight faster than people who weren't depressed. Anxiety has also been associated with overeating and weight problems. Taking care of these brain disorders can be the key to finally losing the love handles or muffin top.

I saw dramatic evidence of this a few years ago when I created a home study course for treating anxiety and depression. To test the course, we enlisted the help of 90 people to take part in the pilot program. The results were astounding.

We learned most of the individuals experienced significant improvement in lowering their levels of anxiety and depression. But that's not all. A number of the people told us that by following the 12-week program, they also lost 20-30 pounds. This surprising result showed us that when people help their brains, they help their bodies too.

Here are natural ways to boost your mood and reduce anxiety:

- › Write down five things you are grateful for everyday. Our research suggests that focusing on gratitude helps to calm the deep limbic or emotional areas of the brain and enhances the judgment centers.
- › Exercise. It has been shown to be as effective as prescription medicine in treating depression.
- › Kill the ANTs (automatic negative thoughts). You do not have to believe every stupid thought that goes through your head. Whenever you feel sad or anxious, write down the thoughts that are bothering you and talk back to them.
- › Supplements: Fish oil, such as Dr. Amen's Omega-3 Power. Low levels of omega-3 fatty acids have been associated with depression and obesity. GABA, such as Dr. Amen's GABA Calming Support, for anxiety.

### **BRAIN INJURIES**

If you are like most people, you probably think your brain is firm and rubbery. In reality, your brain is very soft. Comprised of about 80 percent water, its consistency can be compared to soft butter, custard, or tofu—somewhere between raw egg whites and Jell-O.

To protect your soft brain, it is housed in a really hard skull filled with fluid. Inside your skull, there are a number of bony edges and ridges. Some of these ridges are as sharp as knives and can damage your soft brain in the event of a head injury or trauma. Brain trauma is much more common than you think. Each year, two million new brain injuries are reported, and millions more go unreported.

I am in the middle of performing the world's largest brain imaging, brain rehabilitation study on active and retired players from the National Football League (NFL). So far, we have evaluated and treated more than 100 professional football players.

For many years, the NFL has said that it didn't know if playing professional football caused long-term brain damage. After a number of players came to see me with dementia, depression, and obesity, I decided to study their brains and answer the question once and for all, "Does playing football damage the brain?"

The answer, which did not surprise anyone except perhaps some in the NFL, was OF COURSE PLAYING PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CAUSES LONG-TERM BRAIN DAMAGE.

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But the exciting news is that when we put our players on our brain healthy program, many of them not only lost weight (one of our players lost over one hundred pounds), they also got smarter and happier at the same time. Plus, their cognitive scores improved, sometimes by 200, 300, or even 400 percent.

Here is an example: Big Ed White, age 62, a four-time Pro Bowl offensive guard for the Minnesota Vikings and later for the San Diego Chargers, played 17 seasons in the National Football League. When I first met Ed, he weighed 365 pounds and scored very poorly on his cognitive testing profile. (All of our players take a test called the Microcog, which measures intellectual functioning in nine different areas, including overall general cognitive functioning, information processing speed, attention, reasoning and memory.)

After six months, on our brain healthy/weight loss program, he lost 40 pounds, and his test scores increased dramatically.

Here are natural ways to treat brain injuries:

- Eliminate alcohol and drugs
- Avoid exposure to toxins—paint, nail polish, mold, etc.
- Neuro-feedback: A noninvasive therapy that allows the brain to retrain itself to work at optimal levels.
- Supplements: A high-quality multi-vitamin, fish oil, vitamin D (if levels were low), and Dr. Amen's Brain & Memory Power Boost, which contains supplements that support optimal brain health.

<http://store.amenclinics.com/the-amen-solution-the-brain-healthy-way-to-lose-weight-and-keep-it-off-hardcover-book>