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## ***"You know...that thing" – When Cognitive Decline Begins***

According to recent research published in the British Medical Journal, the brain's capacity for memory, reasoning and comprehension skills, the cognitive functions, can start to deteriorate from age 45 and not 60 as previously believed.

To avoid this, the research places heavy emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, particularly cardiovascular health, i.e. "What is good for our hearts is also good for our heads." I am no physician but in my opinion, there's another preventative measure we can all take: cut down on our use of technology.

To put it even more bluntly: Google, mobile phones, and GPS to name just three of the offenders, have made our brains lazy. I remember far less now than I did when I was a student. Sure, I'm older, but I also give myself much less time these days to try and remember any key points that I need. I just go to the Net and my favourite search engine for the answer.

As for mobile phones, in the days before they existed, my brain got significant exercise as I memorized as many of my contact's numbers as I could – well at least the important ones. I no longer bother because everything is safely stored in my phone and can be easily called up with the touch of a button.

Which brings me to GPS. I wonder if there will be any one left in a few years who knows how to read a map or will we all be blindly following the instructions of the boxes stuck on our windscreens? I realise that we can't and shouldn't just eliminate these devices from our lives. They can, for many different reasons, make the world better. But surely, don't we need to find some sort of better balance? Otherwise, we will increasingly fall back on the phrase "my brain needs a rest" when the opposite may be true.

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