

INSPIRED

To Make Healthy Choices

Learning and remembering what we learned helps us in all our daily decisions.

Just like muscular strength, our ability to remember increases when it is exercised and nurtured with a good diet and other healthy habits.

Memory is the mental activity of recalling information that we learned or experienced. Memory can be short term or long term.

An example of **short term memory** at work is when, at 12 noon, you can recall what you had for breakfast.

Long term memory is when you can still remember five days of activities and some of the restaurant names from your trip to the beach a year ago.

Everyone experiences some form of memory loss. But is technology assisting in our decline?

In Japan, researchers found that 1 out of 10 young people (between the ages of 20-35) had a serious memory problem. This was linked to their dependence on computers and electronic devices that discouraged the use of the human brain and recalling memory.

Barring disease, disorder, or injury, we can improve our ability to learn and retain information. By breaking our routines in challenging ways, we use brain pathways we weren't using before.

Exercise your brain by:

- * Brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand.
- * Shower with your eyes closed.
- * Learn a new hobby.
- * Take a new subject.
- * Learn sign language.
- * Play a new game of strategy.
- * Solve brain games available on the internet or in books.

In addition to exercising your brain, there are some basic things you can do to improve your ability to retain and retrieve memories:

1. **Really** pay attention!
2. Tailor information acquisition to your learning style. Are you a visual (remember what you see/read with your eyes), auditory (remember best by what you hear) or kinesthetic (learn best by doing/touching) learner?
3. Involve as many senses as possible. Try to relate information to colors, smells, tastes and textures such as, "a cat's tongue has the same texture as sandpaper". The physical act of rewriting information can also help imprint it onto your brain.
4. Relate information to what you already know. Connect new data to information you already remember.
5. Organize information. Use both words and pictures in learning information.
6. Understand and be able to interpret complex material. Be able to explain what you saw, touched, heard or learned to someone else in your own words.
7. Rehearse information frequently and "over-learn". Review what you've learned the same day you learn it, and at intervals thereafter.
8. Be motivated and keep a positive attitude. Telling yourself you have a bad memory actually hampers the ability of your brain to remember, while positive mental feedback sets up an expectation of success. Say instead, "I have a good memory" or "I will remember this!"

Reducing and lowering stress in your life can also make a difference. Stress raises your cortisol levels, which is extremely toxic to your brain. Excess cortisol can cause memory loss by killing brain cells.

Take steps NOW to prevent memory loss and cognitive decline.

For more information:
www.guideinc.org

A daily handful of walnuts will keep your mind sharp.

readersdigest.com/braingames or prevention.com/brainfitnessquiz
Exercise your brain!

Redirect any negative self-talk. Be positive!

Keep your mind sharp. Quiz yourself!