

Memory Tips

Storing Memories

Use All Your Senses: If you want to remember an event or information, remember all the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings of the moment. Using all our senses increases the chance of remembering, as memories are believed to be stored in different parts of our brain.

Association: Link the information with something that you know.

Visualization: Remember in pictures. Pictures are concrete and easier to recall.

Exaggeration and Humour: We find it easier to remember things that are out of the ordinary in some way. If we are using association or visualization as memory strategies, exaggeration and humour can make recalling the memory even easier.

Repetition: Repeating the information is necessary in the memory process. Retrieval becomes quicker and easier the more we repeat or use the information.

Pacing: Research suggests that if we attempt to take in too much information at one time, our ability to remember is compromised. Shorter sessions (e.g. study sessions and classes) are more beneficial for remembering.

Meaningfulness: Recall is easier if the material or information is personally meaningful in some way. Try to attach some meaning that is important to you.

Practice: Use flashcards. Put ideas in your own words. Combine memory methods. Form a study group.

Be Creative: Make acronyms (e.g. Colours of the Spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet becomes Roy G. Biv) or make up a sentence using initials (e.g. Roger of Yukon visited Bobby in Greenland).

Retrieving Memories

Mnemonics: This is a term that applies to any method used to improve our ability to remember things. These include techniques that we use to “jog our memories” (i.e. Calendars, Lists, Acronyms).

Many factors affect our ability to recall. To ensure our memory is fit, there are a number of things that we can do. Following are some examples:

Use It or Lose It! Exercise Your Brain

- Play games such as chess, scrabble, and bridge; do crosswords or logic puzzles and general knowledge games.
- Use your opposite hand to work the computer mouse.
- Get dressed with your eyes closed.

Feed Your Brain

- Eat breakfast. Don't skip the first meal of the day because you are in a hurry, instead plan ahead and have quick, nutritious foods ready that you can grab on short notice.
- Ensure you have a balanced diet that includes all the nutrients vital for the brain: iron, protein, sodium and potassium, as well as complex carbohydrates.
- Avoid sugar and fatty foods.

Relieve Stress and Anxiety

- Practice easy relaxation techniques such as alternating tensing and relaxing different groups of muscles.
- Book a massage for yourself - a full body massage, foot massage, or shiatsu.
- Practice meditation, positive visualization, yoga, and breathing exercises.
- Take care of a pet.
- Make time for exercise such as aerobics, brisk walking, skipping, cycling, running, and remember to dance!

Adapted from the work of Susan Higginson, *Wake Up Your Memory*, 1993, The Forge Publishers. ISBN 978095 213286