

How to Improve Your Memory

College can be very mentally exhausting with tons of pages to read for multiple classes. Memory can be a fickle thing but there are ways of improving it! The human brain is a fascinating and mysterious organ. Scientists are constantly making new discoveries about the brain, and psychologists are always coming up with new theories and practices. Take a look at some of these memory tricks and find the right fit for you!

Be Present

IF YOU CAN RESTATE WHAT YOU'VE HEARD IN A LECTURE IN YOUR OWN WORDS, YOUR CHANCES OF REMEMBERING LATER ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN IF YOU LISTEN PASSIVELY. THIS IS CALLED "ATTENDING" AND THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF DOING IT INCLUDING WRITING NOTES DURING A LECTURE INSTEAD OF JUST LISTENING. JUST BE SURE THAT YOUR LAPTOP AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS ARE PUT AWAY TO ENABLE YOU TO FOCUS SOLELY ON THE TASK AT HAND.

Exercise Regularly, Especially Before an Exam

THIS MAY SOUND STRANGE SINCE THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE WHO CAN STUDY AND EXERCISE AT THE SAME TIME, BUT EVEN JUST TAKING A BRISK WALK CAN GREATLY IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY. EXERCISE INCREASES THE FLOW OF OXYGEN WITHIN YOUR BLOODSTREAM, WHICH INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF OXYGEN THAT REACHES YOUR BRAIN. THIS HELPS KEEP YOUR BRAIN FUNCTIONING AT A HIGH LEVEL.

Create Visual Aids

DRAWING A DIAGRAM OR CREATING A "MIND MAP" CAN HELP YOU STORE AND LATER RETRIEVE THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO REMEMBER. THE PHYSICAL ACT OF DRAWING A DIAGRAM WILL HELP YOU COMMIT IT TO MEMORY ALL WHILE HELPING CREATE A NEW CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR BRAIN AND THE MATERIAL.

The 8 Second Rule

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO LOCK IN A PIECE OF INFORMATION, FOCUS ON IT FOR AT THE VERY LEAST 8 SECONDS-LONGER IF POSSIBLE. UNINTERRUPTED CONCENTRATION FOR ABOUT THAT LONG WILL TRANSITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR SHORT TERM MEMORY TO YOUR LONG TERM MEMORY. NEED TO MEMORIZE A VOCAB WORD? REALLY FOCUS HARD ON THE WORD AND ITS MEANING FOR A MINIMUM OF 8 SECONDS AND YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO REMEMBER IT LATER.

Read Out Loud to Yourself

WHEN READING OUT LOUD YOU'RE ABLE TO HEAR THINGS THAT YOU MAY HAVE MISSED WHEN YOU WERE READING NORMALLY. YOUR BRAIN WILL PICK UP ON THINGS THAT YOU MAY HAVE SKIMMED OVER WITHOUT EVER KNOWING IT.

Doodle

DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY THINK, DOODLING IS ACTUALLY GOOD FOR YOUR CONCENTRATION. IF CLASS EVER GETS BORING OR A LECTURE DRONES ON AND ON, DOODLING WILL ACTUALLY HELP KEEP YOUR BRAIN ACTIVE.

Give Your Brain a Rest and Take a Shower

SCIENCE HAS PROVEN THAT TAKING A SHOWER GIVES YOUR BRAIN A REST WHICH CAN ALLOW YOU TO COME UP WITH YOUR BEST IDEAS OR FINALLY FIND A SOLUTION TO A DIFFICULT PROBLEM. WHILE IN THE SHOWER, YOUR BRAIN WANDERS AND THE THINGS THAT YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT SUBCONSCIOUSLY COME TO THE FOREFRONT. ALL OF A SUDDEN, THAT PHYSICS EQUATION ISN'T SO DIFFICULT ANYMORE.

Go to Sleep

THOSE ALL-NIGHTERS ARE DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD. WHILE YOU MAY THINK THE EXTRA HOURS OF STUDYING WILL GET YOU THE GRADE YOU WANT, SLEEP IS VITAL FOR MEMORY. MAINTAINING A REGULAR SLEEP SCHEDULE WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS A BETTER MEMORY.

Clench Your Fists

HERE'S A UNIQUE TRICK: THE NEXT TIME YOU LEARN SOMETHING AND NEED TO RECALL IT LATER, TIGHTEN YOUR FIST. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT IF YOU ARE RIGHT-HANDED AND CLENCH YOUR RIGHT FIST WHILE LEARNING A NEW BIT OF INFO, YOU CAN MORE EASILY RECALL IT LATER BY CLENCHING YOUR LEFT FIST (AND VICE VERSA FOR LEFTIES). AIM FOR 30-45 SECONDS OF CLENCHING, PREFERABLY AROUND A STRESS BALL. THIS IS ALL ABOUT ACTIVATING DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BRAIN. BY SQUEEZING YOUR RIGHT HAND, YOU ACTIVATE THE LEFT HALF OF YOUR BRAIN- THE PART RESPONSIBLE FOR ENCODING MEMORY. BY SQUEEZING LEFT, YOU ACTIVATE THE RIGHT HALF WHICH HELPS WITH RECALL (AGAIN, OPPOSITE FOR LEFTIES).

Quiz Yourself

QUIZZING YOURSELF ON THE MATERIAL IS ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST COMMON TRICKS TO HELP WITH MEMORIZATION. IT HELPS YOU TO IDENTIFY WHAT YOU KNOW WELL AND WHAT YOU NEED TO WORK ON MORE. ONE OF THE SIMPLEST WAYS TO DO THIS IS THROUGH FLASHCARDS. MAKING THEM BY HAND ADDS A LAYER BECAUSE YOU'RE WRITING EVERYTHING OUT.

Repetition

WE ALL MEMORIZE THROUGH REPETITION WHEN WE LISTEN TO OUR FAVORITE SONG A HUNDRED TIMES AND SUDDENLY WE KNOW EVERY WORD. IN THE SAME WAY, WHEN YOU LISTEN TO A DEFINITION YOU'RE TRYING TO MEMORIZE AS EITHER YOU OR A FRIEND REPEAT IT OVER AND OVER, THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER IT MORE QUICKLY. IF YOU WANT TO REMEMBER THE ORDER OF A STORY, IT MAY HELP TO READ ITS SUMMARY SEVERAL TIMES. WITH NEW TERMS AND SPELLING DIFFERENCES, SOMETIMES WRITING AND REWRITING SOMETHING UNTIL IT BECOMES SECOND NATURE CAN HELP YOU MEMORIZE IT.

Chew Gum

CHEWING GUM WHILE LEARNING SOMETHING KEEPS YOUR BRAIN ACTIVE AND HELPS YOU CONCENTRATE. WHILE CHEWING IT HELPS MORE OXYGEN FLOW TO THE BRAIN, DUE TO THE EXERCISE OF THE JAW AND IT STIMULATES THE BRAIN'S HIPPOCAMPUS, WHICH IS AN AREA THAT AIDS MEMORY.

Practice on Others

A GREAT WAY TO PRACTICE ONCE YOU FEEL YOU KNOW THE MATERIAL IS TO TEACH IT TO SOMEONE ELSE. NOT ONLY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW SOMETHING BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS BEFORE YOU ARE ABLE TO TEACH IT, BUT THE FACT THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS DEPENDING ON YOUR KNOWLEDGE INCREASES THE STAKES ENOUGH WITHOUT ADDING UNDUE STRESS.

Use Mnemonic Devices

THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF MNEMONIC DEVICES: RHYMES, ACRONYMS, IMAGERY, AND CHUNKING. ALL OF THESE ARE AMUSING AND PLEASING SO THEY WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER THINGS EASILY.