



How to Improve Your Memory

There are many things you can do to improve your memory, among them the use of certain mental techniques, as well as special care with nutrition and medicines.

● **To stimulate memory.** Use your memory to the utmost. Challenge a novelty. Learn new skills. If you work in an office, learn to dance. If you are a dancer, learn to deal with a computer; if you work with sales, learn to play chess; if you are a programmer, learn to paint. This could stimulate your brain's neural circuits to grow.

● **Pay attention.** Don't try to memorize all the facts that happen, but focus your attention and concentrate in what you consider more important, avoiding all other thoughts. Exercise: take any object, as a pen, and concentrate on it. Think on its various characteristics: its material, its function, its color, its anatomy, etc. Don't allow any other thought to occupy your mind while you are concentrating on that pen.

● **Relax.** It is impossible to pay attention if you are tense or nervous. Exercise: hold your breath for ten seconds, then release it slowly.

● **Associate facts to images.** Learn [mnemonic techniques](#). They are a very efficient way to memorize large quantities of information.

● **Visualize images.** See figures with the "eyes of your mind". Exercise: Close your eyes and imagine a big and juicy steak. Smell its aroma and feel the softness of its meat. Imagine yourself cutting it with a knife and fork, then tasting it. If your mouth filled with saliva while you visualized this scene, then you have done a good work! Do these exercises with other objects, like a bowl of soup, an ice-cream cup, a chocolate pie, anywhere, as a dental office, an examination room, etc.

● **Foods.** Some vitamins are essential for the proper working of memory: tiamin, folic acid, and B12 vitamin. They are found in bread and cereal, vegetable and fruits. Some experts say that synthesized vitamins improve memory, but others have doubts about this, arguing that the studies have not confirmed these nutrients do work.

● **Water.** Water help maintain the memory systems working, specially in older persons. According to Dr. Trukington, lack of water in the body has an immediate and deep effect on memory; dehydration can generate confusion and other thought difficulties.

● **Sleep.** To be able to have a good memory, it is essential that we allow the brain to have enough sleep and rest. While sleeping, the brain disconnects from the senses, and proceeds to revising and storing memory. Insomnia would produce a chronic fatigue and would impair the ability of concentration and the storing of information.

● **Medication.** Some medicines can cause loss of memory: tranquilizers, muscular relaxants, sleep pills, and anti-anxiety drugs, particularly the benzodiazepinics that include the diazepam (valium) and the lorazepam. Some medicines for the control of high blood pressure (hypertension) may cause memory problems and depression.

● **Alcohol.** The alcoholism is one of the most serious candidates to affect memory. Alcohol interferes specially with short-term memory, which impairs the ability of retaining new informations. Studies have shown that even the ingestion of low quantities of alcoholic beverage during one whole week will interfere with the ability of remembering.

● **Smoking.** It is already well known that smoking lower the amount of oxygen arriving in the brain, and this fact many times affect memory. Studies have shown that, when compared with non-smokers, individuals smokers of one or more packs of cigarettes a day had difficulties of remembering people's faces and names in a test of visual and verbal memory ([Turkington, 1996](#)).

● **Caffeine.** Coffee and tea have a very positive effect to maintain attention and to end sleepiness, but the excitation promoted by these drinks may interfere with the memory function.

Other tips (such as take notes, get organized, use a diary, keep fit, regular health checks, memory aids, etc).

Contd. [Human Memory: What it is and How to Improve It](#)

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