



MASTERING **MEMORY**

Stop Forgetting
The Important
Things

By The American institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.

Table of Content

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Using Mnemonic Devices	2
Chapter 2: The Mindful Approach	6
Chapter 3: Memory Tricks	9
Chapter 4: Your Lifestyle	12
Chapter 5: Mastering Your Memory - One Step at a Time	16

Introduction

There's no way to keep the memory completely intact as we age. We lose five percent of the nerve cells in the hippocampus part of our brain that builds memory every decade we're alive.

Besides that fact, aging prohibits the production of the neurotransmitter, acetylcholine – necessary to memory and the learning process. But, studies show that with a little effort on your part, you can slow the brain's aging process and boost your memory power significantly.

This guide, "Mastering Memory: Never Forget the Important Things," will help you see how important your memory is to staying young and vital. Studies show those who exercise their brains can actually ward off early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Chapter 1: Using Mnemonic Devices will introduce you to the simple ways you can assimilate volumes of information in your brain so that you have quick and easy access. Association, visualization and observation are just some of the mnemonic devices you'll learn about.

Chapter 2: The Mindful Approach can help you perfect your memory skills by using some mindful memory techniques which the military are finding useful for reducing PTSD in soldiers who return home after being deployed in battle zones.

You'll also learn some ways to trick your brain into remembering. Such tricks as moving your eyes, chewing gum, deep breathing and more are discussed in Chapter 3: Memory Tricks.

Your current lifestyle has everything to do with how your memory (and your body) ages. Your brain and your body must both be fed and exercised properly to get the nutrition they need to function and to withstand the effects of aging. Chapter 4: Your Lifestyle, will suggest some habits you should change and lead you in the direction which will enhance your memory rather than destroy it.

Chapter 5: Mastering Your Memory – One Step at a Time, will wrap up the guide and send you on your way with the knowledge you need to withstand the ravages of time and preserve your memory well into your later years.

You'll learn how to control your mind so that you know you're doing everything you can to keep your mind as active as possible. This guide, "Mastering Memory: Never Forget the Important Things," can help you relax about the little things such as forgetting where you put your keys and know you're doing everything possible to keep your memory intact.

Chapter 1: Using Mnemonic Devices

The word “mnemonics” comes from the Greek Goddess of memory – Mnemosyne and the term broadly refers to a group of memory techniques to help people quickly and easily assimilate volumes of information for easy access.

One of the best ways to increase your memory power is to use Mnemonic devices such as association, rhymes and acronyms. When you learn how to use these methods effectively, you’ll be “encoding” the memories in your brain and will be better able to recall specific information.

Everything is faster and more accurately recalled by using Mnemonics including faces, figures, events, names and faces. It’s also much more fun than the ordinary method of repetition to remember and recall because Mnemonics uses the senses (sound, touch, sight and smell).

Mnemonics uses the methods that our brain uses to store information in the following ways:

- Visualization – Visualized memories are stronger than text you may read. Most images are alive and vibrant and easy to remember.
- Observation – Observing something is different than merely seeing it with your eyes. We pass people in the street that we “see,” but don’t necessarily commit to memory by observing.
- Association – We associate memories without even realizing it. For example, if you meet someone on a plane, you’ll always associate that person with the plane ride experience.

Mnemonics are useful techniques which can help you commit information to your long term memory so you don’t have to spend so much time in repetitious memorization.

Types of Mnemonics

You may be more adept at one type of Mnemonics than another – or you may use them all according to what you’re attempting to remember. Here are a variety of Mnemonic methods that you might want to try:

- Association – This is a good method to remember facts and especially helpful if you’re a student or have a career where it’s imperative that you have instant recall on volumes of factual information.

For example, if you need to remember that Franklin Roosevelt was president during World War II, you could associate his last name with an image of roses (for Roose) and velvet (velt). Velvet roses are a good image for the name.

To remember numbers, break them down into smaller groupings. For example, if you have trouble remembering your driver’s license number and the number is 186543807, you can break it down to 186-438-07. Then, use visualization such as “186” (miles to the next town), “438” (your best friend’s phone prefix) and “07” (your condo number).

- Rhymes – Rhymes you’ve known since your childhood can be perfect mnemonic devices to help you recall information. The most common one for students might be, “Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen-hundred ninety-two.

Students and those who need to remember factual information use associative rhymes all the time to remember. If you can’t remember how to spell Mississippi, think “M-I-crooked letter-crooked letter-I-humpback, humpback-I. It’s fun and it works.

- Chunking – Another popular method of mnemonics is chunking which involves grouping things together to form something easy to remember. For example, if you need to remember lettuce, olives, detergent and envelopes when you’re at the supermarket, simply keep the word “L-O-D-E” embedded in your mind.

We remember phone numbers more easily because there are spaces between groupings of numbers and you can do the same for a driver’s license number or any other long series of numbers you must know.

- Acronyms – A mnemonic device that’s great for remembering a large amount of information. You can use acronyms which are already in place (such as H-O-M-E-S, for remember the Great Lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior) – or make them up.

Ingredients in a recipe can be remembered by making up an acronym such as, B-R-O-C-H for the ingredients: Beans, Rotel, Olives, Chili powder and Hominy to make chili.

- Acrostics – Similar to acronyms, acrostics involves creating a sentence out of the first letters of a grouping of words you need to remember. For example, to remember the five elements in the chemistry periodic table (Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron), you might make up the following sentence:

“His Heavy Load Breaks Backs.”

- Loci – Since ancient Greece, the mnemonic method of Loci has been used to memorize large amounts of information. It involves choosing a path or route that you're familiar with and then visualizing and memorizing the things you want to remember along that path.

If you have a certain supermarket you like to shop at and are extremely familiar with what's on the aisles, you probably arrange your grocery list by aisles and picture going down each one in order of your list.

- Stacking – A great memory recall technique that you can use for remember long lists. To make it work, visualize the items you need to remember in a tall, colorful and “stacked” method. You may want to put yourself on the top of the stack to personalize it.

For example, if you need to remember several items at the pet store (treats, food, sweater, leash and shampoo), you could picture a tall stack of dog food wrapped in a warm doggie sweater with treat bags sticking out of the neck. Put the leash around the neck of the sweater, your dog on top of the stack (with its fur bubbly with shampoo). Easy and fun. Add colors and other “embellishments” to make it more memorable.

Begin small and simple and then attempt to add information as you're comfortable remembering a half dozen objects or names by using the mnemonic method.

Main Points of Chapter 1: Using Mnemonic Devices

When you learn how to use mnemonic devices such as rhyming, association, acrostics and acronyms, you'll be well on your way to improving your instant recall memory. Below are some important points you should have taken away from Chapter 1:

- Association is a form of mnemonic exercise that involves associating factual information with an image or of breaking up long numbers in a shorter format to remember more easily.
- Rhymes can help you recall facts and information. "Columbus sailed in ocean blue in fourteen-hundred ninety-two." Students of all ages find this method easy when trying to memorize volumes of information.
- Chunking is also a fun and easy mnemonic device. You'll group things (anything) together to form something that's easy to remember. For example, "Detergent, Olive oil and Green beans" forms the word, "DOG," which you can then break out into the items when needed.
- Acronyms are best for remember a great deal of information for instant recall. Many students recall the Great Lakes for a test by remembering the word, H-O-M-E-S, which translates to Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior.
- Acrostics are great ways to remember things that don't make sense otherwise. For example make a sentence out of CABS by thinking "Chronic Asthma Brings Sickness."
- Loci has been used since the ancient days of Greece and involves memorizing things or people on a path that you're familiar with. As you walk down the route or path, visualize the things you want to remember appearing along the way.
- Stacking is another fun way of using visualization to remember things. You can use your vivid imagination to build a picture of things on a list you must remember.

There are other methods of mnemonics you may want to study, but the above are the top ways to help your memory with the use of mnemonics.

Chapter 2: The Mindful Approach

Using the mindful approach to remember things can be as fun and easy as playing Sudoku and crossword puzzles. Keep in mind that you can't work up to a good memory if you keep thinking you have a bad one – so stop telling yourself that your memory is bad. Use a positive approach and celebrate the times you do remember.

The key to mastering memory is to keep the brain exercised. This stimulates the growth and development of nerve connections which can keep improving the memory. So, basically, the more you exercise your brain, the better your memory becomes.

You can challenge your brain power in many ways using mindful approaches. Besides the normal ways such as puzzles and memorization, you should get out of your comfort zone and try something new once in a while.

Go back to school to get a degree, learn a new language and new games. Find ways to give your brain the ultimate workout – just as you would if you were trying to exercise your body to become fit.

Mindful Memory Techniques

The mindful approach to memory is now being used by the military to enhance objective attention and general cognition. Studies indicate that even practicing brief, mindful techniques can enhance the working memory and may prevent loss of memory during stress.

Here are 6 tips to use mindful approaches to master memory techniques besides the ones mentioned above:

1. Learn a new skill. Anything you'd enjoy and want to learn that's new to you is a great way to improve your memory skills and exercise a larger part of your brain.
2. Practice better observation. It's like taking a picture with your brain, but making it as clear as possible. A good example is when we meet people to memorize the face and associate it with the name you're given. Practice saying the name over in your mind and seeing the face at the same time.
3. Use a variety of senses. Use as many senses to remember things as you can. The more you stimulate your brain in different areas, the easier it will become to remember and store things for instant recall. For example, writing information on paper by hand stimulates a different part of your brain than memorization from a page.

4. Flash cards for studying. You probably remember flash cards in your elementary days of school. It consists of a card of any size with a question on one side and the answer on the other side. Separate the cards you know by heart and those you still need to memorize.
5. Don't confuse your memory by cramming. Cramming for a big test or work presentation only stimulates your short-term memory. If you have time, designate study times so your brain can embed the information in your long-term memory.
6. Use items at hand to jog your memory. If you have to remember to take certain medications on a daily basis, do something like placing your remote control on the refrigerator. When you take the pills, place it back on the coffee table.

The main tip to remembering things is to be able to focus on it before you move on to something else. If something is truly important to remember, study it carefully by avoiding distractions or engaging in other tasks before you have it locked in your memory database.

Main Points of Chapter 2: The Mindful Approach

You can have fun using the mindful approach to improve your memory. Games such as Sudoku and the daily crossword puzzle can increase the nerve cells in your brain and expand its ability to learn. Here are some main things you should know from Chapter 2:

- Learn a new skill – Going back to college or taking college courses can give the brain a good workout.
- Learn a language – Much help exists, both online and from CDs and DVDs to help you learn just about any language you desire.
- Observe – Make it a point to intricately observe what you need to remember. It could be a route to a new place or the layout of a school. Take a picture in your mind.
- Flash cards – One of the oldest learning methods, flash cards are still good memory builders today.
- Use things to help you remember – For example, remember to take your keys with you by putting a chair or other obstacle in front of the door until you have your keys in hand.
- Focus – When you really need to remember something, cut out all distractions and attempt to focus solely on what you must remember.

Ultimately mastering your memory means that you should constantly exercise your brain in various ways. Mnemonics and the Mindful approach are two ways in which you can enhance your memory by expanding your brain's capability.

Chapter 3: Memory Tricks

Using certain methods to remember information, faces, numbers and other things is a tried and true way of tricking your brain into having instant recall when you need it most – studying, traveling, taking a test and more.

Memory tricks also involve using your brain and your wits to do things differently. For example, using rhymes which point exactly to what you're trying to remember, using associations such as numbers and words and mindfulness when can are all ways to trick your mind into remembering certain things.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was very adept at remembering people's names. He used a trick of imagining the name written across the person's forehead the minute they were introduced. Repeating a name aloud when you're introduced is also used to remember names.

You can keep your brain exercised and vital by playing games, learning new skills, using mnemonic devices and playing tricks on your brain to make an impact. Although it isn't a cure for Alzheimer's disease, keeping your brain active can help to ward off the early symptoms.

Trick Your Brain Techniques

Mastering your memory also includes tricking your brain into remembering vital information. You can trick your brain by thinking outside the box about what helps you remember – is it photographic image taken in your mind? Or, perhaps it's similar to Roosevelt's method of picturing the name of the person on his or her forehead.

Whatever method works to trick your brain can be expanded to include other ways of remembering. Here are a few tricks you'll want to try:

- Squeeze a ball. It's actually been proven that some people can squeeze a stress ball in their dominant hand just before memorizing data. When you're ready to recall the information, squeeze the ball in your left hand for a few seconds.
- Speak it. Say aloud the information you want to remember. For example, if someone is giving you directions, repeat the directions afterward. Saying the information out loud reinforces your memory.
- Rosemary. Studies show that you can improve your memory recall by smelling the herb, rosemary. You can take rosemary oil or a sprig of rosemary with you and smell it a couple of times per day to get the full effect.

- Draw a mind map. Picture a tree in your mind, much like a genealogical family tree and form the branches with things you must remember. For example, if you have a hectic daily schedule, picture the trunk of the tree as the day and branch off into tasks you must accomplish. This is handy if you're "on the go" and need instant recall.
- Deep breathing. The yoga method of deep breathing changes the way your brain operates. If you're going into a lecture or class where it's important for you to remember things, practice deep breathing for a few moments before the event and you can more easily remember new facts and information.
- Do something different. If you need to remember that today is your wedding anniversary, simply wear your watch or your ring on the other hand. It will serve as a quick reminder every time you glance at your hand or check the time.
- Chewing gum. Your dentist might not approve, but chewing gum actually stimulates the brain so that you're more focused and can remember more information.
- Your eyes. Moving your eyes back and forth for about 30 seconds per day can make your brain operate more effectively. Try it when you wake up in the morning to have more memory recall the rest of the day.

Your brain is a powerful part of your body. No one knows everything we could do if we understood even half of the power it offers. Our brain deteriorates in time, just as our bodies do –so, it's important that you keep exercising your brain (and your body) as you age.

It's fun to test your memory at new skills and at tricking your brain so you remember things important or vital to you. Try all or some of the exercises mentioned in this guide to keep your memory fresh and your brain active.

Main Points of Chapter 3: Memory Tricks

Trick your brain by chewing gum? Yes, that's one way that some people employ to memorize information. Performing some varied acts while learning or memorizing information can have a profound effect on the way your brain operates. Here are some of the main things you should have learned in Chapter 3:

- Use all your senses – Using all senses will stimulate your brain in ways that help you remember faces, numbers and volumes of facts. For example, sniffing certain herbs helps to stimulate the brain.
- Do things differently – Even wearing your watch on the other arm can help you recall certain information such as birthdays and anniversaries. They're simple tricks that you can make up for your own ways of thinking.
- Say it aloud – Sometimes all it takes to remember the name of someone you just met is to repeat his or her name aloud after you're introduced. It reinforces the name so you're more apt to remember it next time.
- Squeezing a ball – Stress balls aren't just for relieving stress. You can squeeze one in one hand (and then transfer it to another) to remember all sorts of information.
- Mind maps are helpful – Just as you need a map to get you to your destination (if unknown), so can you use a map you formulate in your mind to remember things visually.

It's particularly important to exercise your brain as you age. Just like your body, the brain tends to deteriorate as the aging process takes place. Exercise the brain just as you would your body.

Chapter 4: Your Lifestyle

All of the previously listed methods in this guide, “Mastering Memory,” won’t work as well if your lifestyle isn’t conducive to boosting your brain power. You know some of the paths to a healthy lifestyle, but there are others you may think are irrelevant but that actually play a huge part in keeping your memory and your body in top condition.

The brain must be fed and exercised, just as the body, and if you don’t exercise, eat unhealthy foods, gain weight and are generally a couch potato watching mindless television, your brain and your body will suffer the consequences.

This chapter will give you a better understanding about how to better plan your lifestyle and make needed changes so you can live a longer and more fulfilling life. When your mind and body are in sync, there’s almost nothing you can’t accomplish.

Tips to Improve Your Memory by the Lifestyle You Lead

Certain habits and lifestyles can erode your memory and keep you from enjoying the vital and healthy life you could be leading. Smoking, obesity, stress and other factors can wreak havoc with your brain so that even the techniques mentioned in this guide won’t be of much help.

Just as it “takes a village to raise a child...” – it takes caring for your entire body, including your mind – to improve your memory and live an active lifestyle for the rest of your years. Here are some tips to help your memory and stay active:

- Get organized – If you’re not organized, you risk losing things and becoming stressed and frustrated. You may be perfectly organized at work, but lack that same skill at home.

There are all types of ways you can get and stay organized. For example, if you miss deadlines constantly, you can download one of the many applications expressly designed to help you remember important meetings and details.

Other organization methods involve objects you might pick up at a container store. Color-coding and other helpful methods can help you stay focused on what’s important.

- **Maintain a Healthy Diet** – Dieting isn't only for your body – your brain needs the nutrients you get from eating a diet high in antioxidants that will protect your brain from the free radicals which can wreak havoc on your cell production. Foods that contain low glycemic carbohydrates such as oatmeal and any food that's comprised of omega-3 fatty acids are good for brain and body. A diet plan such as the Mediterranean Diet concentrates on fruits, vegetables, legumes, fish and nuts – and low on meat – are recommended. Studies indicate that meat contains omega-6 fatty acids and that it could contribute to inflammation of the brain – a contributing factor in Alzheimer's disease.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Sleep is imperative to an effectively functioning brain. Neuroplasticity is the process of brain growth which controls your brain's behavior and how it learns and memorizes. Lack of sleep can eventually erode the neuroplasticity process and impair the memory. For adults – an afternoon nap has the power to dramatically increase and restore the brain's effectiveness. Even though most adults only need eight hours of sleep per night, you may need more slumbering time if you feel fatigued or sleepy during the day. Both long- and short-term memory may be affected by the amount of sleep you receive. To ensure the sleep you need, go to bed and wake up at the same time and wind down before you go to bed rather than exercising. Also, limit your alcohol use as it interferes with the sleep process.
- **Stop multi-tasking** – Everyone thinks that multi-tasking helps you get through with a job faster, but we now know that when you're multi-tasking the brain slows down significantly. If it's important for you to remember how you're doing a task and doing it well, you should be mindful about what you're accomplishing and focus on it completely. That speeds up the brain and helps it preserve memories. Studies show that you should spend at least eight seconds focusing on the task at hand.
- **Exercise regularly** – Exercise is key to enjoying a healthy lifestyle as much as maintaining a healthy diet. When you exercise, nerve cells are stimulated and release neurotrophic factors – an important protein that helps other helpful chemicals to form. Aerobic exercise is especially helpful to improve circulation to the brain and keep from experiencing memory loss that often comes with the aging process. Besides aerobic exercises, engage in strength training, stretching, flexibility and core exercises so that all parts of your body stays healthy.
- **Healthy gut** – Maintaining a healthy gut is vital to brain health. The gut produces bacteria which send data to your brain by the vagus nerve – the main cranial nerve that extends from your brain to your gastrointestinal tract's nervous system. Studies indicate that if your gut has abnormal flora, your brain likely has it too and that would prohibit serotonin (a neurotransmitter) which controls mood and depression in your brain. Essentially, your gut health and your brain functions are closely aligned and both must

● Vitamins – Even though you may maintain a healthy diet, you still may not be getting the vitamins and minerals you need for ultimate brain health. If you really want to improve your memory, you should find out if you're deficient in the following vitamins:

Vitamin D – Increases nerve growth in your brain that plans and processes new memories. Vitamin D comes from the sun, but you can also take Vitamin D-3 supplements.

Vitamin B12 – Slows brain shrinkage, especially in areas most affected by Alzheimer's diseases. Folic acid and vitamins B6 and B12 can lower levels of homocysteine which are associated with brain shrinkage.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids – Contain antioxidants which help you brain stay healthy and function properly.

Thiamin, Niacin – Foods that contain these vitamins include curry, celery, walnuts, chickpeas, blueberries and healthy oils such as olive and coconut. Fatty fish such as salmon also contain these vital brain vitamins.

● Reduce stress – Out of control chronic stress can actually damage the brain and cause remembering to be much harder. You may not be able to reduce all stress from your life, but you can lessen it and learn how to handle it.

Relaxation techniques such as yoga and deep breathing can help reduce the harmful effects of stress. Reducing your caffeine intake, massages and spending more time with family and friends can also help.

Last, but certainly not least on the list of improving your memory is to laugh. "Laughter is the best medicine," is really true when it comes to keeping your brain active and healthy.

When you laugh, certain parts of your brain "lights" up like the Fourth of July –especially in the areas of your brain which control your memory. Pets are also part of training the brain to enjoy life and perk up the memory muscles.

Main Points of Chapter 4: Your Lifestyle

If your lifestyle is in the ditch, your memory will be also. You've got to match your lifestyle with how you want your brain to work. That means eating a healthy diet, exercise (both body and brain) and keeping stress at bay. Here are some main points of Chapter 4:

- Organize your life so that it's uncluttered – and your brain will be also.
- Sleep is imperative to keep your brain active. Make sure you get plenty of uninterrupted sleep each night and take cat naps during the day, if needed.
- Don't multi-task. When you multi-task, your focusing abilities are off. Your memory is better served when performing one task at a time.
- Eat healthy. Your brain needs the proper nutrients as much as your body, so it's important to eat healthy if you want to maintain brain health throughout life.
- Keep your gut (digestive tract) healthy. The gut produces bacteria that's necessary to keep the brain humming.
- Exercise your brain and your body. Cardio is necessary to provide oxygen to the brain and keep the memory far into the aging process.
- Check your vitamins. Vitamin D, B and Omega-3 fatty acids are essential to good brain health.

You should also laugh often. Laughter stimulates the brain as much as any of the above techniques. It's a part of life that you should cultivate.

Chapter 5: Mastering Your Memory – One Step at a Time

In this chapter we are going to review some of the tips, ideas and strategies suggested in the previous chapters. Then we are going to give you a chance to develop an action plan so that you can put some (or all) of the suggested ideas into action in your own life.

This is your opportunity to commit to develop a strong memory now and for years to come! So let's have some fun with it.

Mnemonic Devices	Action Item
Association	<p>Create an association to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example if you need to remember that Franklin Roosevelt was president during World War II, you could associate his last name with an image of roses (for Roose) and velvet (velt). Velvet roses are a good image for the name.</p>
Rhymes	<p>Create a rhyme to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example, "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen- hundred ninety-two."</p>
Chunking	<p>Try memorizing your driver's license number by chunking it into blocks of 3</p>
Acronyms	<p>Create an acronym to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example, H-O-M-E-S, for remembering the Great Lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior</p>
Acrostics	<p>Use an acrostic approach to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example, to remember the five elements in the chemistry periodic table (Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron), you might make up the following sentence:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">"His Heavy Load Breaks Backs."</p>
Loci	<p>Use the loci approach to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example, arrange your grocery list by aisles and picture going down each one in order of your list.</p>
Stacking	<p>Use the stacking method to help you remember something important in your life right now.</p> <p>For example, if you need to remember several items at the pet store (treats, food, sweater, leash and shampoo), you could picture a tall stack of dog food wrapped in a warm doggie sweater with treat bags sticking out of the neck. Put the leash around the neck of the sweater, your dog on top of the stack (with its fur bubbly with shampoo).</p>

Mindful Approach **Action Item**

Learn A New Skill Choose a new skill to learn as part of your efforts to improve your memory long term.

Practice Better
Observation

Practice remembering a new person you meet by seeing and repeating their name with their face.

Use A Variety Of
Senses

Use multiple senses to help you remember something important in your life right now.
For example, write down an important piece of information and repeat it out loud as you write it.

Flash Cards For
Studying

Use flash cards to help you remember something important in your life right now.
For example, you could use flash cards to help you remember how to perform new tasks at work.

Use Items At Hand
To Jog Memory

Use an item at hand to help you remember something important in your life right now.
For example, if you have to remember to take certain medications on a daily basis, do something like placing your remote control on the refrigerator.

Memory Tricks	Action Item
Squeeze A Ball	Try the squeezing a ball technique to help you remember something important in your life right now. For example, squeeze a ball in your dominant hand while memorizing your doctor's phone number. Later, squeeze the ball with your other hand while trying to recall the number.
Speak It	Try speaking aloud to help you remember something important in your life right now. For example, if someone is giving you directions, repeat the directions afterwards. Saying the information out loud reinforces your memory.
Rosemary	Go purchase some rosemary from the whole foods store and try smelling it a few times a day for the next 2 weeks. Pay attention for any improvements with your memory.
Draw A Mind Map	Try building a mind map to help you remember something important in your life right now. For example, if you have a hectic daily schedule, picture the trunk of the tree as the day and branch off into tasks you must accomplish.
Deep Breathing	Try deep breathing to help you remember something important in your life right now. For example, if you are about to study or learn something new, try taking a series of deep breaths first.
Do Something Different	Try doing something different to help you remember something important in your life right now. For example, if you need to remember that today is your wedding anniversary, simply wear your watch or your ring on the other hand. It will serve as a quick reminder every time you glance at your hand or check the time.
Your Eyes	Starting today try the method of moving your eyes back and forth for 30 seconds as a way to stimulate your brain. Repeat for a few weeks and observe the results.

These action items will give you a great starting point for not only understanding how to improve your memory, but actually putting the memory exercises into practice.

Before we send you on your way, there is one additional area to cover that is vital to understanding memory and memory performance.

Serious Problems Which May Affect Your Memory

The techniques discussed in “Mastering Memory: Never Forget the Important Things,” can help train your brain to be at its healthiest and most active – helping you preserve your memory skills. Your brain is a vibrant organ and is constantly changing – sometimes for the worse.

The brain’s central memory area – the hippocampus – is there to regenerate the brain’s cells throughout your life. Your brain can keep regenerating far into your later years if you know and practice the techniques designed to keep it active.

When you go about your daily activities, your brain is “re-charged” with every new and healthy thing you accomplish and learn. If you lack sleep on a daily basis your brain can be affected in a negative manner and if you eat an unhealthy diet or never exercise, you can run the risk of interfering with your ability to remember.

But, a healthy lifestyle and some stimulation to the brain in the form of mnemonics and mindful approaches can encourage your brain to produce new neurons. This process is called neuroplasticity or neurogenesis and is the most powerful way to regenerate your brain for years to come.

There are some factors which can affect your memory and which you need to control:

- **Thyroid gland** – The thyroid doesn’t directly affect your brain, but if you suffer from hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism, you can have difficulty with focusing and remembering things. Addressing the problem with your health care provider can help to solve the problem.
- **Frequent infections** – Those who are more prone to viruses (such as herpes, type 1, simplex) and who are more apt to succumb to germs score lower on cognitive tests than those with a lower risk factor. Damage to blood vessels may be the cause for this anomaly.
- **Menopause** – The ravages of menopause can include factors such as how well your sleep and loss of memory. Although this is only a temporary problem, there are some solutions you can try to alleviate the symptoms. Drinking green tea and reducing stress are just a couple of ways to reduce the negative effects of menopause.
- **Anxiety/Depression** – Stress hormones (such as cortisol) are increased by anxiety and depression. When this happens, your brain loses the ability to connect brain cells (synapses). When this occurs, you may have less ability to keep and retrieve memories.
- **Medications** – Certain medications (especially prescription) can interfere with your brain and memory functions. Anxiety medications, in particular, can obstruct the ability of the brain to relocate short-term memories into long-term memories. Drugs such as Xanax, Ativan and Valium can severely limit the brain’s functioning powers. Some over-the-counter medications, such as Benadryl, can also affect memory.

We live in a society where cognitive functions are highly regarded and even the least little fear that we're losing it is cause for alarm. Misplacing your keys or not having instant recall of someone's name is no longer considered being "absent-minded," but a symptom of something much more threatening.

Greater fear about memory loss has led to much more public awareness of dementia, Alzheimer's disease and a growing concern about how to keep our brains functioning at their top levels far into old age.

This guide, "Mastering Memory: Never Forget the Important Things," is designed to help you overcome your fear of losing your memory and put you in control of your brain and how it operates.

Hopefully, you'll gain a new knowledge and make a plan about what you're going to do to keep your brain functioning at its ultimate height. The techniques contained in this guide should put you at ease about your memory and put you on the right path of preserving it – for a lifetime.

Thank You

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