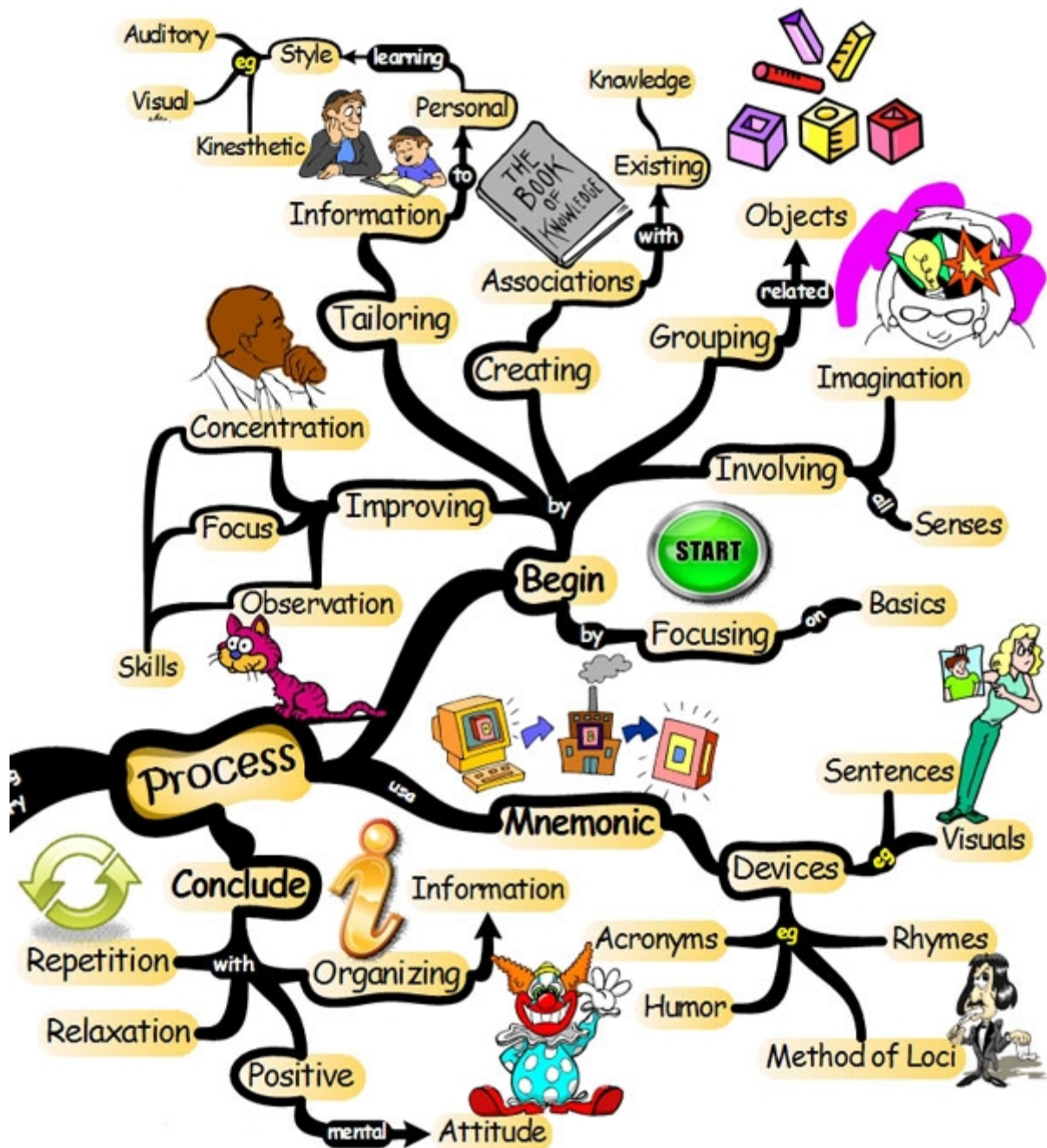


Introduction to the Keys to Improving Your Memory

When we were kids, remembering things seemed to be so easy and effortless. We could remember and recall facts, numbers, names, learn new languages almost over night, and it all just seemed so effortless and simple that we didn't even think twice about the process of remembering or learning. However, as we grow older - and hopefully wiser - our memory does come under question at times. It could be because we are being bombarded with so much more information today than we ever were in the past. Or it could simply be that we have been so far removed from the academic learning game that our brains have just become lazy and fail to take the necessary critical steps that would allow it to easily and effectively organize, process and recall information with precision and speed. The good news is that no matter what your age or level of academic experience, you too can dramatically improve your memory by following some sound, tried and simple principles. These 5 keys to Improving Your Memory involve simple processes, strategies, exercises and nutritional guidelines that will keep your brain fresh, active and at peak condition at every moment of your life. Learn them, apply them and incorporate them into your daily experience, and you too will benefit from a vastly improved memory and a better recall ability.

The 5 Keys to Improving Your Memory Study Matrix / Mind Map is available as a free desktop wallpaper download at the [SMX Art Store](#).

1. Improving the Memory Process



If we were for a moment to step into the mind of an individual who has an outstanding memory, what would we see? What exactly would their thinking process tell us about how they think about things on a daily basis? What would we learn about the way they process information then organize and recall it at ease when it is required? Even though every individual may have a slightly different strategy of processing and organizing information - if we were to zero in on a general understanding of what these great memory thinkers do, than it would probably look something like this:

- **Improve Concentration, Focus & Observation Skills** - Many of us don't realize it, but we tend sabotage the memory process unconsciously through the simple act of not paying attention, focusing, concentrating or incorporating keen observation skills that are the essential building blocks for improving your memory. Have you ever listened to someone talk, read an article, or listened to a lecture and then realized several seconds or minutes later that you have absolutely no idea what the information was about? Yes, this no doubt happens to many of us. However, you can change this habit by simply teaching yourself to pay attention to the details in every conversation, book, lecture or piece of information that you come across. Begin by paying attention to the larger picture, the purpose of the information and seeing it as an organized piece of knowledge in your mind (somewhat like a study matrix / mind map). You can also practice by testing your observation skills of details within your house, office or bedroom. Simply, take 30 seconds to look around your room at all the details, colors, furniture and other visuals. Next, close your eyes and recall from memory where everything is located, including colors, placement and all the other vivid details. Finally, open your eyes and check to see how accurate your memory was. You can also do this with photographs, and it is strongly suggested you perform this exercise within an environment that you are not very familiar with.
- **Tailor Information to Your Personal Learning Style** - There are 3 essential learning styles involving either visual, auditory or kinesthetic learning. Subconsciously and consciously you are likely to favor one of these styles over others. For instance you might find that you learn information much more readily and easily through reading and seeing pictures (visual style). On the other hand, someone else might prefer listening to an audio version of that information as this is much more complimentary of their learning style (auditory). While a third person may only learn through means of interacting with this information in some way, shape or form (kinesthetic). Simply, determine your preferred learning style and adapt the information you are trying to process into your long-term memory in a way that will be consistent with this method of learning.
- **Create Associations with Existing Knowledge** - It is said that the more languages you know the easier it is to learn another language. How is this possible? Whenever we learn something and take it into our long-term memory storage banks, it becomes familiar to us. We clearly understand this information, can recall and access it at a moments notice. Later when we undertake the process of learning a new language, there will always be some concepts, ideas, character structures, grammatical patterns, etc, that are quite familiar to us based on our past experience in learning languages. This therefore makes learning a 3rd, 4th and 5th new language much easier than it was learning your 2nd. Knowing this, simply understand that to better remember and recall information, you must find links and associations of related concepts and ideas that you are already familiar with, and connect them with the knowledge you are currently learning. In this way you will improve your memory and recall ability.
- **Group Related Objects** - When you have large chunks of information to remember, it makes it easier to take a little time to group this information into related parts that naturally compliment each other. It is as though you are creating category folders on your computer for Word and Excel files. Just imagine for a moment that you had 500 different Word and Excel files on your computer about many different topics within a single folder. This type of structure would make finding the file you want more

difficult and time consuming. Instead, how about organizing these 500 files into about 20 related folders and then maybe even breaking down each of those folders into more sub-folders. If you understand that this would be a more efficient and effective means of finding information, than you will also understand how important it is that you classify your information in a similar fashion within your brain on a continuous basis throughout your day.

- **Involve Your Imagination & Senses** - Our imaginations lay down foundational principles for building strong memory and recall. While you are listening or reading a new piece of information, try at the same time to create vivid pictures in your mind in ways that will bring this information to life like never before. Exaggerate these visuals, make them weird, funny and most of all, memorable. Your imagination is simply a film projector turning pieces of content into a vivid story that will make recall much more easy, efficient and effective. Moreover, learn to utilize all your senses to improve your memory. Read information out loud, do something with the information, visualize the piece of information in a unique and memorable way, even try incorporating your sense of smell and taste to add extra sensual vividness to the information you are learning.
- **Focus on just the Basics** - Sometimes we just become confused with the amount of information that is being thrown our way at home, work, on the Internet or at school. It is easy to get quickly overwhelmed with all these new pieces of wisdom that we just can't seem to grasp. In situations like this, many of us might just give up as we are simply unable to comprehend what we can't recall or understand. The solution for this is to focus on the basics. Just commit yourself to understanding the basic building blocks of the information and move from there. It may help to create a Study Matrix / Mind Map of the information on paper to allow you to grasp a Birdseye view of the content within one visual frame. Once you have the basics in place, you will then be ready to expand on your understanding of each basic level of information one step at a time.
- **Utilize Mnemonic Devices** - Mnemonic devices are simple tools and clues that we can use to remember something. Utilize **visual images** by linking them to the information you are trying to remember. This could be as simple as associating a person called "Daisy" with the daisy flower. Utilize **sentences** where the first letter or each word represents a list or set of words within a group. For instance memorizing the lines of the treble staff is best remembered as - **Every Good Boy Does Fine**. Utilize **acronyms** which involves taking the first letter of each word within a list and creating a word (out of these letters) that represents the entire list of words. Utilize **rhymes** to assist in memory and recall of information. Simply turn the information you would like to remember into a rhyme, poem or rap song. Utilize **humor** by making the things you would like to remember funny, amusing and entertaining in some way. You can even create an interesting funny story or joke about this information that will make it stand out in your mind. Finally, utilize the **Method of Loci** which involves the process of associating each part of what you seek to remember to a landmark on a route as you are commuting to school or work.
- **Organize Your Information** - Once you have collected the information you want to remember, be sure to organize it in a way that will make it easy to find within your mind as well as within the physical world. Organize the information you are learning

through the use of colors, codes, labels, folders, categories, etc. Organize this information within your brain by using all the above methods spoken about.

- **Repeat to Improve Your Memory** - Through the process of regular repetition of the information that you would like to remember, you are informing your brain of its relative importance. As a result your brain will always make this information easily accessible at a moments notice.
- **Take time to Relax** - In order for your memory to be at its peak, you must make sure to get adequate relaxation and sleep. No matter how efficient and effective your memory is, if you are not rested it will undoubtedly let you down.
- **Have a Positive Mental Attitude** - Finally, the memory process wouldn't be complete without a quick discussion about the importance of a Positive Mental Attitude (PMA). Having a PMA is absolutely essential to a healthy brain and effortless recall. Always believe in yourself that you have a great memory and that no matter how much information is trying to upload itself into your memory storage banks, that you will find a way and method to process, organize and recall it when it is required at a later time. Also as a final thought, don't ever catch yourself saying "I don't remember" or "I forgot"; this will only work to your disadvantage when it comes to cultivating a PMA.

conviction and repeated many times throughout your day, it could very well instill the belief you need to boost your memory and recall of information.

- **Begin Setting Goals** - Setting goals is obviously an important aspect of life when it comes to personal success and achievement. However, what many of us may not realize is that setting goals can also boost your memory and ability to recall information. Here is a simple explanation - when you set goals, you are at that moment giving your brain a direct command by outlining a purpose and an objective that you are aiming for. Automatically your brain sees these targets as being important and will therefore store them away and make them easily accessible whenever you need this information. Given this knowledge, begin setting small goals throughout your day that you will work towards accomplishing. Make them real by writing them down on pieces of paper like you would do with TO DO lists...
- **Organize Yourself through Creating TO DO lists** - Leading on from goal setting, TO DO lists are like mini-goals that you set yourself on a daily basis that point you in the direction of your larger goals and objectives. The simple act of taking the time to write things down - that you would like to accomplish throughout your day - increases your chances of remembering two fold.
- **Clear all Unresolved Issues** - For many of us, the greatest memory saboteurs are simply unresolved issues that we have neglected over time. The numerous problems and issues that we are carrying at the forefront of our mind effect our focus, concentration, listening and thinking ability. All these issues drain us physically, emotionally and mentally - After all of this, is it any wonder that we can't remember simple things? Resolve today to clear as many unresolved issues as you can. It will be like clearing out your closet of all the mess that has been progressively building up over the years. Throw away and distance yourself from everything that you no longer need, and pay the price with an uncluttered and vastly improved memory and mind.
- **Find a Place for Everything** - This extends from the previous point. If you are finding that you are spending too much time looking for things, than simply commit yourself today to finding a place for everything at home, work, school, in your car, etc. This will save you time and help you unclutter your mind, leaving room for the more important things that are really worth remembering.
- **Refresh Your Mind Regularly** - Keeping your mind adequately refreshed will dramatically help you to boost your memory and recall. Have you every tried to remember something when you were under an overwhelming amount of stress? If yes, than you know how important it is to ensure that your mind is rested at regular intervals for optimum performance. You can rest your mind through simple relaxation, meditation or simply by taking regular breaks throughout your day. Finally, if you are experiencing difficulty in trying to remember something than it might help to simply sleep on it. As you nod off to sleep, ask yourself a question that will help trigger an answer. You may find that as you awake in the morning the answer will magically pop into your mind when you least expect it.
- **Take Advantage of the Mozart Effect** - Classical music composed by Mozart has been proven to assist with better memory retention and recall of information. By simply playing Mozart's piano sonata in the background while you are working or studying, can assist in improving your memory. For more information [click here](#).
- **Visualize What to Remember** - Whenever you would like to remember a piece of information, simply stop yourself for a moment and take a few seconds to create a

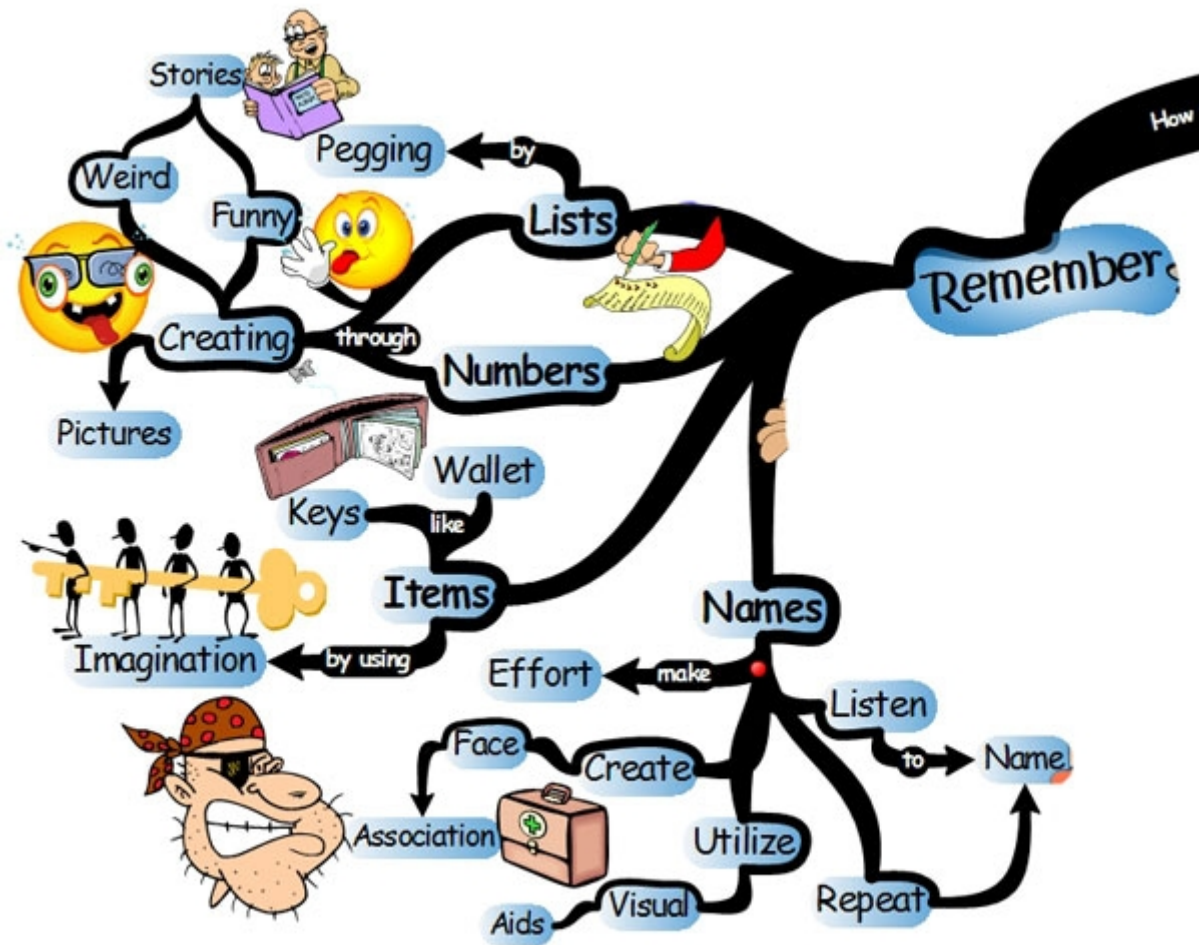
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visual image, picture and representation in your mind about this object, information or situation. This simple act will help increase your ability to recall this information at a later time.

- **Write Reminders on Back of Hand** - If in doubt, write it out. The back of your hand is like a portable notepad for simple reminders. However, use it sparingly only as a backup reminder tool. Improving your long-term memory should be your number #1 objective.
- **Keep a Notepad & Journal** - Similar to the “back of the hand” technique. Keep a notepad in your pocket at all times for simple reminders. Finally, writing out a daily journal can be a great way to sort your thoughts and clear the clutter from your mind.

Find Similar Articles and Mind Maps at the Study Matrix Art Blog
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3. How to Better Remember Things



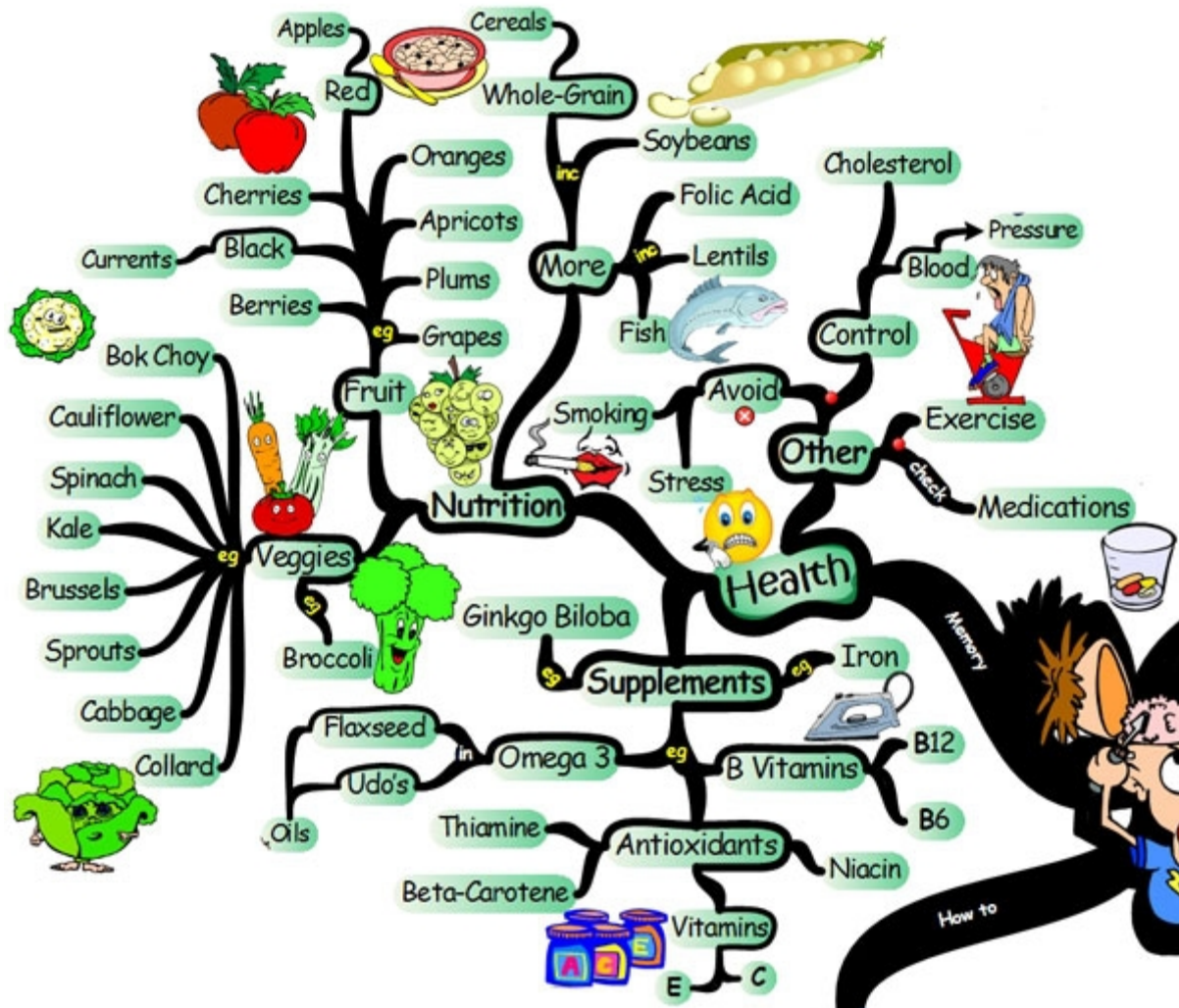
Have you ever been introduced to a person and ended up forgetting their name a few moments later? Have you ever misplaced your keys or wallet? Have you ever been given a telephone number that you simply could not remember? Have you ever found it difficult to recall long lists of items? If you answered YES to any of these questions than these guidelines will set you on track towards improving your memory:

- **How to Remember Names** - Remembering names first begins with working on your listening skills. Simply begin by paying attention, making an effort and listening to the name that the person gives you. If the name is unusual or you missed it for some reason, ask the person to repeat it again or to spell it for you. Next, be sure to repeat the persons name several times within the next couple of minutes while you are conversing with them. This will assist in locking the name away into your long-term memory. Thirdly, ask the person for a card so that you can obtain a visual representation of their name. And finally, to lock the name away into your long-term memory, associate the person's face with their name in some way. For instance observe the person's features such as nose, ears, mouth, hair, etc, to pinpoint something that might stand out in your mind. Now use this feature and piece it

together with their name. For instance if someones name was Adam and you notice that they have a big bulging Adam's Apple, than you can associate the name Adam with their Adam's Apple.

- **How to Remember Where Placed Items** - I'm sure that most of us have experienced more than one moment in our lives where we misplaced our keys or wallet. If this is a regular occurrence in your life, than fear no longer as there are a couple of ways to rid yourself of this habit once and for all. Firstly at home, identify a specific place within a room where you will ALWAYS place your keys and wallet. Secondly, if for some reason you cannot place your keys within this spot or you are in an unfamiliar environment, than take a moment to stop yourself before leaving your keys on a bench or table. Stop yourself for just 5 seconds and imagine the table burning or eating your keys in a creative and vividly memorable manner. Use a lot of movement and incorporate as many of your senses into the experience as physically possible. This act alone should trigger your memory when it comes time to look for your keys. There is no doubt that it will take a little practice to get into the habit of doing this. However, after a few tries, your brain will automatically create these visual images on its own without a second thought.
- **How to Remember Numbers** - Remembering telephone numbers is best accomplished using one of two methods. The first is to create pictures in your mind that are associated with each number. **1** = Tree, **2** = Light Switch, **3** = Stool, **4** = Car, **5** = Glove, **6** = Beer, **7** = Dice, **8** = Octopus, **9** = Cat, **10** = Bowling Ball, etc. Each of these numbers are associated to the "picture word" in some way. Now, when someone gives you their telephone number use these pictures to create a story involving this person. Making your stories weird and fun will assist in helping to improve your memory recall. Derren Brown uses a similar technique, however he associates the numbers to specific and memorable events that are significant and important in his life. Check the explanation of his method [here](#).
- **How to Remember Lists** - Remembering lists is a very similar to the process of remembering numbers. First it is important to chunk or group the list into smaller pieces whenever possible. Next, take these chunks and combine them together into a memorable, weird and funny story in your mind. However, make sure to separate each individual chunk or piece on the list clearly within this visual story. This will assist in improved memory recall. Now, go ahead and visualize this story 3 or 4 times within your mind before thinking about other things. With practice and repetition this technique will become second nature.

4. Memory Health Fundamentals



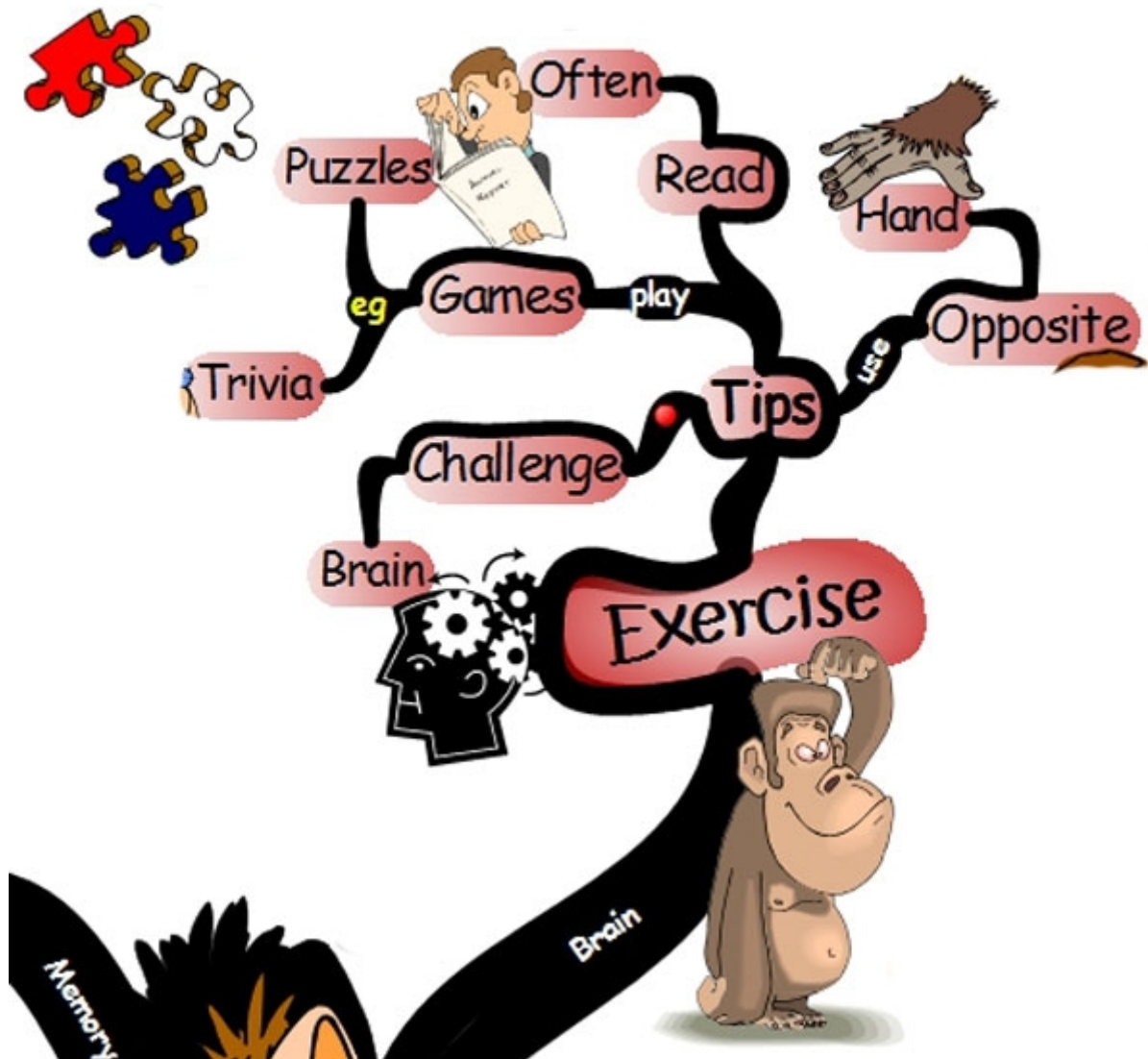
Sometimes we tend to forget that memory strategies and techniques only comprise half the pieces of the puzzle. The other half pertains to our health and nutritional intake. The simple fact of the matter is that if we live in an unhealthy manner, disregard our nutritional obligations, don't get enough exercise or sleep, and constantly bombard our body with toxins - than no matter what wonderful and effective memory strategies we utilize on a daily basis, we simply won't be in the right frame of mind for effective and efficient memory recall of information.

The following list presents you with some simple nutritional strategies and activities that are known to boost your brain power and improve your memory and recall:

- **Memory Boosting Supplements** - Supplements such as Vitamins (B12, B6), Antioxidants (Vitamins E, C, Niacin, Thiamine, Beta-Carotene), Omega 3 Fatty Acids found in Flax-seed and Udo's Oil, Ginkgo Biloba and Iron, have all been found to support the building blocks of memory and can assist in improving recall.

- **Memory Enhancing Vegetables** - Vegetables are a great source of many types of essential nutrition. However, there are certain vegetables that promote, enhance and can actually boost brain power. Vegetables such as Collard, Cabbage, Sprouts, Brussels, Kale, Spinach, Cauliflower and Bok Choy will get you started on the right track.
- **Memory Building Fruits** - There are also specific memory boosting fruits such as Grapes, Plums, Apricots, Oranges, Berries, Black Currents, Cherries and Red Apples.
- **More Memory Improving Foods** - Other foods that can assist with improving memory and recall include Fish, Lentils, foods containing Folic Acid, Soybeans and Wholegrain Cereals.
- **General Memory Enhancing Strategies** - As a general rule of thumb, to improve your memory and to keep it functioning at optimum levels be sure to avoid smoking and stressing at all costs. These two unfortunate habits have very negative consequences and side-effects on both long and short-term memory. On the other hand, people who undertake regular exercise have shown to have enhanced memory function and recall ability. Finally, control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, as they are critical factors for the long-term health and well-being of your brain. Also check with your doctor to see if any of the medications you are taking might be preventing you from potentially improving your memory recall and ability.

5. Exercise Your Brain to Keep it Young & Vibrant



To finish off our discussion about memory, it would be wise to quickly point out a few simple exercises that will keep your brain at peak conditioning throughout the year:

- **Continuously Challenge Your Brain** - As was mentioned earlier, “What you don’t use, you are likely to lose”. Don’t take your brain for granted. We exercise our body because we would like to become fit and healthy. You should also exercise your brain to keep it in peak condition all year round. Do this by simply challenging your brain to remember things, to calculate numbers, recall lists, names, directions etc, throughout your day. Yes occasionally it is okay to write things down on paper or to make calculations using a calculator. However, it’s much better to regularly exercise

your brain and test your memory as often as possible. Only through use can it improve. And only through improving will your memory and recall get better with age.

- **Play Brain Games** - Challenge your brain by playing games that stimulate your thinking and recall of information. Whether it be puzzle games, trivia quizzes, scrabble, sudoku, crosswords, or the Nintendo Brain Age electronic game - just get yourself involved, have fun, get others involved and test your brain in new and creative ways each and every day. The more often you get your brain involved with these types of activities the better your memory will become.
- **Read Often** - Earlier on within this discussion we discussed the importance of making associations with existing knowledge and information. We spoke about how learning a 4th language was much easier than learning a 2nd language because of existing associations that were previously created. By reading books often on a variety of topics - that you may initially not be familiar with - will create many new associations within your brain that will lead to improved memory and recall of information.
- **Use Opposite Hand** - This could well be the most overlooked strategy for boosting your brain power. It is so easy to just look past this suggestion without giving it a second thought. However, simply spend a couple of weeks using your opposite hand to brush your teeth, to eat, to wash yourself, to write, to open doors, etc - and you may well see a transformation in your thinking patterns as well as your memory recall process. By using your opposite hand to undertake simple tasks, activities and chores that your dominant hand takes for granted, you are stimulating and exercising the opposite side of your brain for what maybe the first time in your life. "That which hasn't been used in a long time, could be the key that unlocks many wonderful things"



Through continuous diligent effort and repetition, you can boost your memory and recall of information in ways that you may not have imagined was possible before. Use these guidelines as daily tools to get yourself into proactive habits that will promote a better and more effective memory that won't leave you hanging when you are relying on it most.

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