

Ten tips for improving memory



Memory is one aspect of your brain health. It's also a skill that requires some maintenance.

You need to keep your brain healthy for it to function well. And to keep your brain healthy, you also need to look after your physical and mental health.

So, what can you do to look after your brain, body, mental health, and memory?

Here are 10 tips to help you remember things more easily.

Try these practical tricks for remembering things

1. Write things down

It sounds obvious because it really helps!

Our brains have lots of storage space, but it's easiest to process a small amount of new information at a time. Writing things down helps keep your mind from getting overwhelmed.

Consider writing down your appointments, to-do lists, and important information. You can use calendars, diaries, or digital planners. This way, you don't have to remember everything in your head.

Writing things down also helps you remember them because it turns ideas into real notes you can see and use.

2. Review new information

Reviewing new information means engaging with it to build your understanding. Understanding something is a good way to remember it for longer.

If you review information soon after learning it, you strengthen your memory of it. Repeated review strengthens the pathways in your brain that store this memory.

Space out your reviews over time. This lets your brain practice recalling the memory and makes it easier to remember in different situations. All this review can then deepen your understanding of the memory and make it even stronger.

Example

Say your granddaughter tells you her favourite band and her favourite song by that band. Here's how you can periodically review this information:

- Try to recall the name of the band, the song, and what the song is about.
- Look it up or check your notes to see if you were right.
- Listen to the song.

Do this review once every few days. Then do it once a week, then once every few weeks. Slowly space your reviews out more and more. These actions help strengthen the memory, making it easier to recall in the future.

3. Use mnemonic devices

Mnemonics are techniques that help you remember information more easily. For example:

- Visualisation. Try creating mental images of what you want to remember.
- Association. Try linking new information to knowledge you already have.
- Acronyms. Make abbreviations from the first letters of a series of words. This creates a memorable shorthand for new information.

Good mental health supports memory

4. Look after your mental health

Too much stress can overwhelm your mind. It can impair memory retrieval and affect how memories are formed.

You can manage stress by doing things you enjoy. This could mean going for walks, spending time with family, or working on your hobbies. Here are [5 more tips for reducing stress](#).

Various mental health conditions can also affect brain functions. Depression, anxiety, or sleep disorders can all impair memory. To combat this, seek [mental health support](#) when you need it.

5. Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness means focussing on your present feelings and environment without judgment. Studies suggest that mindfulness practices can improve brain functions. Working memory (a type of short-term memory) may be one of the most benefited areas.

For example, meditation (a mindfulness exercise) can help you reduce stress and improve attention. And attention is needed to store new information. You can learn more about meditating with the Smiling Mind app. It's a free, evidence-based mindfulness toolkit.

You could also try [chair yoga](#) or [Tai Chi](#). These are known as mindfulness body exercises. They help bring your focus to your body with deep breathing and controlled movements.

Example

Try this mindfulness meditation: Sit or lie down comfortably and focus on your breathing or something calming. If your mind wanders, gently return your attention to what you feel in your body. Set a timer and try it out for 5 or 10 minutes.



Exercise your brain

6. Stay mentally active

Challenging your brain is good for it. Especially if you challenge yourself with hard work you can enjoy. Puzzles, games, and [learning new skills](#) are good examples. These give your brain a workout, which helps it build pathways for sending information.

In turn, this helps you build up something called cognitive reserve. This is your brain's store of thinking abilities. The more reserve you have, the more resilient your mind is to age, and to disease such as dementia. So, having lots of cognitive reserve will help you maintain your memory skills as you get older.

Creative activities like writing, [reading](#), [painting](#), singing and [dancing](#) are also great ways to start building your reserve. Your brain does a lot of exercise when you engage with the arts!



7. Stay socially active

Speaking with friends and meeting new people is also a good brain workout. Conversations require you to process speech, tone, facial expressions, body language, smells, and more, all at once.

Socialisation is also a comfort, as well as a workout.

Staying [connected with your community](#) helps you age well.

Having a good social network can delay memory loss, lower your risk of dementia, and help you live longer.

Quantity and quality are both important. A wide and diverse social network exercises your brain. But supportive friends and family help you relieve stress, which is good for your brain and body both.

Good physical health supports memory

8. Stay physically active

Regular exercise reduces stress and pumps you full of feel-good hormones. It helps you manage and prevent chronic illnesses and disorders such as [diabetes](#), [arthritis](#), [high blood pressure](#), and [insomnia](#).

Exercise also releases chemicals that encourage new growth of blood vessels and cells in your brain. That means improved brain function. Harvard Health Publishing says 6 months of moderate-intensity exercise will boost your memory and thinking skills.

Learn more about [exercise recommendations for older people](#).

9. Eat well

[Eating well](#) benefits both your physical and mental health. This promotes optimal brain function, and better memory.

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Berries, nuts, seeds, and fish rich in omega 3 fatty acids are especially good for brain health.

Be wary of over-the-counter supplements that claim to boost your memory. There's no solid proof that supplements work, according to Harvard Health Publishing.

10. Stay hydrated

Finally, be sure to drink enough water. This is good for your overall health, but also supports your memory. Dehydration can impair memory, mood, and other brain functions.

Try keeping a water bottle with you so you can drink whenever you feel thirsty. And consider having a drink of water after your coffee, as caffeine can dehydrate you. Here are some more [tips for staying hydrated](#).

Also try to drink alcohol in moderation. Over time, too much alcohol can impair your brain function and memory.

More helpful information

Everyone is different so some of these tips may work better for you than others.

If you're concerned about your memory, keep a record of what's making you concerned for a couple weeks. You can take this 'symptom diary' to your doctor for assessment.

If you need more information, get in touch with one of our helpful team on **1800 951 971**.

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