



WE ALL ACCEPT THAT the average person in his 60's or 70's can't run as fast or jump as high as he could at age 20 or 30. For some reason, however, we find it harder to accept that our ability to store and recall information is not as sharp in older adulthood as in our youth. However, most of us experience some decline in memory efficiency as we age, especially after age 70 or so. But all is not lost! There are a number of simple things you can do every day to compensate for mild memory loss. Not all of these strategies will be useful to every person, and you may be doing many of them already, but give some of the others a try!

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

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Give Your MEMORY



**MORE EVERYDAY TIPS TO
IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY**

by Jason Brandt, Ph.D.



HERE ARE SOME MORE TIPS FOR A BETTER MEMORY.

- 1. Write It Down** - This tip was given in our previous guide, but it's so important that it bears repeating! Whether you're writing notes to yourself on a calendar, in a datebook, on a memo pad, or even (in a pinch) on the back of your hand, using written reminders is the most important thing you can do to remember important things. Don't worry, it's not cheating!
- 2. Use Acronyms and Acrostics** - Can you name the Great Lakes? How about notes on the musical scale? Or the colors of the rainbow? If you can, chances are you used an *acronym* or *acrostic*.* These are easy-to-remember words (acronyms) or phrases (acrostics) made up on the initial letters of difficult-to-remember information. Make up your own to remember lists of apparently unrelated words. Can you think of one to remember the planets of our solar system (in order from the sun)? How about the names of our current Supreme Court Justices?
- 3. Become an Active Listener** - If you attend a lecture or a seminar, don't just take the printed hand-out provided by the speaker. Take your own notes. The process of putting material in your own words and writing it down helps you remember it.
- 4. Get a Good Night's Sleep** - There is very good evidence that memories are consolidated (made more permanent) during sleep. While your home computer can save new information instantaneously—at the press of a key—your brain typically requires six hours or more of natural sleep to make stable memories. But beware of sleep medications; some of these interfere with the memory consolidation process. (Always consult your health care provider before using sleep aids.)
- 5. Become an Active Reader** - Use the **PQ4R** method to study and remember factual material. Before you delve into a book chapter, **P**review the material. Ask yourself **Q**uestions to guide your studying. Then, **R**ead it, **R**eflect on it, **R**ecite answers to your questions, and, finally, **R**evise what you've just done. It might sound like a lot of work, but it's easier and more natural than you think!
- 6. Make it a Habit** - Recent neuroscience research has revealed that habits are more deeply ingrained and more resilient than so-called "episodic memories." Develop routines, always performing tasks in the same way at the same time. If Thursday mornings become your regular time for grocery shopping and every Wednesday evening is laundry night, you'll be unlikely to run out of bread or milk (or clean underwear!)
- 7. Save Your Memory** - One way to maximize your memory functioning is to not rely on it so much! Why worry about remembering to pay bills? Most mortgage companies, utilities, and credit card companies can arrange automatic deductions of your monthly charges or scheduled payments directly from your checking account. You'll be sent a statement in the mail or by e-mail for your records, and it will be one less thing to have to remember!
- 8. Exercise Your Brain** - The brain is *not* muscle that is strengthened with use. However, recent studies have shown that people who engage in strenuous mental (and physical) activity often experience less memory decline as they age. Whether the activity *causes* the preservation of memory is not yet clear, but there are some tantalizing suggestions that this might be the case. So stay mentally active! Take a class. Learn a new card game. Do challenging puzzles. Play along with your favorite TV game show. At the very least, you'll have some fun!

* *HOMES* - for Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior
Every Good Boy Does Fine - for E, G, B, D, F
ROY G. BIV - for red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet