

**The ability to memorize and recall facts and concepts is valuable for both students and professionals. In many fields and cultures, a strong memory is associated with competence, intelligence, and respect. Strong memory skills are built through repetition, learned habits, and a healthy body.**

## Strategies to Strengthen Your Memory



**Repertoire** - Most people rely on just a few familiar memory strategies. Try expanding the techniques you use by incorporating a variety of mnemonic techniques.

- A larger “toolbox” of strategies lets you adapt to different types of material and different learning situations.



- Mnemonics are techniques that are used to improve memorization and recall.
- Most people use at least one mnemonic technique and are not even aware of it.
- Mnemonic devices include using rhythms, rhymes, acrostics and acronyms.
- Check out our [Mnemonic Devices](#) handout for more detail.



**Organization** - Look for themes, patterns, hierarchies, and relationships among ideas.

- Organizing information allows you to reduce many small details into larger, meaningful “chunks.”
- Complex information can often be simplified into core principles from which details can be logically reconstructed.



**Recall** - Don't rely solely on passive review like rereading your notes. Actively practice recalling information.

- Many people only remember a fact when given a very specific cue.
- By practicing retrieval using a wider range of cues, you strengthen your ability to recall information in different contexts (like a test environment).



**Involved** - Passive exposure, like listening to recordings while you sleep, does not build real understanding.

- Instead, actively think about and engage with the material.
- Discussion, teaching others, and group study deepen comprehension, which is necessary before long-term retention can occur.





**Selection** - When studying large volumes of information, be strategic.

- Focus on key concepts and major ideas rather than trying to memorize every detail.
- Too many trivial facts can overwhelm your working memory and actually make it harder to retain the important material.



## Memory Interrupters

Several factors interfere with memory formation and recall. Some prevent memories from forming in the first place; others weaken existing memories.



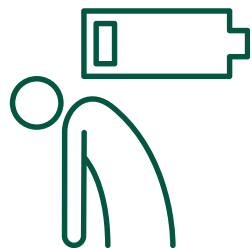
### Attitude

- A negative mindset is one of the biggest barriers to memory.
- To remember something well, you must:
  - Believe the information is worth remembering
  - Believe you are capable of remembering it
- A self-defeating attitude reduces focus, motivation, and retention.



### Interfering Stimuli

- These can block the formation of new memories or damage existing ones:
  - Alcohol and drugs
  - Lack of sleep
  - Too much caffeine
  - Panic or anxiety
  - Electronic media (TV, video games)
- These factors overstimulate, distract, or physically impair brain function.



### Habits and Situations

- These conditions make it harder to pay attention and learn information properly:
  - Hunger
  - Emotional stress
  - Lack of sleep
  - Negative or self-defeating attitude
  - Electronic media (again, as a major distraction)
- When initial learning is weak, later recall becomes very difficult.

