



September

Member Newsletter



Tips to keep your memory sharp

Forgot your keys, a recent movie plot, a neighbor's name or the right word to use in a sentence? You're not alone!

While a dulled memory can be a result of the normal aging process, forgetfulness can also be triggered by a variety of factors, many of them pandemic-driven, including anxiety, stress, disrupted routines, confinement, boredom, and more. But no matter what your circumstances, the following tips can help restore your memory power.



Counter stress. Grief, relocating, financial troubles or just the ongoing bombardment of disturbing news can release stress hormones that, over time, can affect the brain's ability to store and recall information. Whenever possible, unplug from social media, TV, etc. In addition, make a plan to deal with troubling stressful situations. For example, if money issues stress you out, develop a detailed plan to reduce your expenses and debt.



Challenge your brain! Recent lockdowns might have taken away novel experiences that help stimulate the brain. But you can still learn something new right where you are, whether it be a foreign language, computer skills, new recipes, or listening to an intriguing podcast series.



Give your brain solid cues. Try visualizing someone's face with their name written across it. Or use association to connect a person with something you may also be interested in, like their birdwatching hobby. Use organization: Always keep keys, glasses, cell phone, and your wallet in the same place. Try grouping your grocery list by item category—even if you forget the list, you are more likely to remember its content.



Stay fit, eat right. Cardiovascular health helps your memory because it allows the heart to effectively pump blood with nutrients and oxygen into the brain. To fuel your brain, exercise regularly—take daily walks or join an online workout class. Additionally, choose foods high in healthy fats, such as avocados, olive oil, nuts and seeds. Go for fish, lean meats, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.



Don't let memory slips throw you off! Focus on your capabilities and really lean into learning what you want to remember.

If you're becoming increasingly forgetful, check with your doctor. Memory problems can stem from depression, trauma, allergies, hypothyroidism, cardiovascular problems like high blood pressure, and other illnesses, as well as certain heart medications, antidepressants and even cold remedies. Other causes for memory problems include aging, dementia and Alzheimer's.







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Easy Ways to Brighten Your Meals

Fruits and vegetables are nutritional powerhouses that are part of a healthy eating plan. While specific recommendations vary based on age, calorie intake and activity levels, most adults should be consuming at least 2 servings of fruits and 2.5 servings of vegetables each day. Eating many different colors of fruits and vegetables can help you get even more nutritional benefits from these foods. Common colors of fruits and vegetables include blue, purple, red, orange, yellow, white and green. **These tips can help you brighten your meals!**

-  **Stock your fruit bowl.** Keep many colors of fruit on hand like bananas, apples, pears, peaches and plums—they're great for a quick snack and a bright, edible decoration!
-  **Assemble a bright snack.** Wash, cut and bag cherry tomatoes, yellow bell peppers, carrots and celery as a vibrant pick-me-up.
-  **Pick ready-made options.** Pre-cut, pre-washed salad in a bag can make preparing a meal very easy.
-  **Drink a smoothie.** Try making a smoothie by blending three different colors—for example, a smoothie with spinach, pineapple and blueberries gets you green, yellow, and blue!

-  **Give your sandwich a new twist** by adding cucumbers, sprouts, avocado, red and green peppers, apples, strawberries, melon slices or pears.
-  **Double up.** Cook two vegetables at once for additional flavor and color such as broccoli and cauliflower, peas and carrots, or peppers and onions.
-  **Try rainbow chard or rainbow carrots**—they are both already multicolored! You can find them in yellow, orange, red, purple, green and white.
-  **Choose a healthier side.** When you're dining out or ordering takeout, opt for a healthy salad as a side dish instead of choosing a fried side such as French fries or onion rings.

Strategies to communicate more smoothly

Communicating with others, whether with friends, family or coworkers, is not always easy, especially if you have different communication styles or views on any given subject. Misunderstandings can easily arise, leaving you feeling like you're not being heard, taken seriously or are being unfairly criticized. **To make your interactions go more smoothly, try to keep your emotions in check and use these tips:**



- **Really listen to the person.** Do so even if he or she is irritating or long-winded.
- **Avoid being judgmental and try to stay objective.** Focus on the good and what they are doing right.
- **Show your respect and that you are open to the person's opinion.** Avoid frowning, looking away, rolling your eyes, or checking your cell phone if you don't agree with someone's opinion.
- **Don't dominate the discussion, interrupt, or make speeches.** Be patient and pause between your sentences, allowing others to collect their thoughts and express themselves. It can take longer for some people to put their thoughts into words.
- **Make comments that invite the other person to open up.** You might ask, "What do you think about brainstorming about the project?" Or, "Does my idea make sense?"
- **Use "I" statements to frame your thoughts and opinions.** For example, when discussing a hot button subject, you might say something like, "I've always found that..." This can help avoid putting the other person on the defensive.
- **If the dialogue is going in the wrong direction, take a moment.** Consider if you're doing anything to antagonize the other person. Are you being fair?
- **Find a way to end a discussion that's going nowhere.** You might say, "I see your point but we'll have to agree to disagree." Or, "You bring up some interesting points, I'll have to think about that." Then make your exit with a smile.

For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide affects people of all ages. It is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34, the fourth leading cause among people ages 34-54, and the fifth leading cause among people ages 45-54

The COVID-19 pandemic's health risks and social restrictions can leave anyone—especially those who are depressed or overwhelmed by life and feeling hopeless—struggling with suicidal thoughts. But depression can be treated, and there is support to help you overcome your struggles and renew hope. Seeking help is a sign of strength.

Know the warning signs. Get Help. <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html>

