how to improve memory
14 tips

Abridged and edited from an article by Dr S. Tamer, published in NaturalNews.com, 12-9-08

Memory is our ability to process information; we encode, store and retrieve information by memory. Many of us would love to be able to improve our memories, and, also, because memory is so important to our daily functioning, it is important to take steps to guard against memory degeneration.

LEVELS OF MEMORY
1. Sensory memory - This is a very short form of memory that can accommodate large amounts of information that may be visual, auditory or other information, depending on which sensory organs are involved.
2. Short-term memory - This has limited capacity, both in the duration of retention and in the amount of information that can be put into 'storage'. At this stage, information may be processed and passed into long-term memory or may be forgotten.
3. Long-term memory - This memory has unlimited capacity, duration and storage 'space', and the information is stored in an organized manner.

TYPES OF MEMORY
1. Procedural Memory - Is concerned with learning and skill retention.
2. Semantic Memory - Is concerned with facts.
3. Meta Memory - Is concerned with laws and principles.
4. Episodic Memory - Is concerned with experience and life.

CAUSES OF FORGETTING
1. Interference from other information which may be learned earlier or later
2. Anxiety
3. Emotional and physical stress
4. Psychological state - such as not having any interest in the subject
5. Some drugs like narcotics
6. Trauma to the head
7. Brain injury or disease

TIPS THAT HELP MEMORY RECALL AND OVERALL MEMORY STRENGTHENING
(1) When you need to retrieve some information, try to place yourself in the same situation that you were in when this information was processed. The retrieval of information is more easily obtained in the same circumstance or place of input.
(2) In the retrieval situation, being in the same mood as you were in when the information was processed is also helpful.
(3) When memorising information, make it meaningful. For example, when memorising people's names, associate the name with something or someone that you already associate with that name.
(4) Heighten the significance of the information you need to store by linking it to a specific emotional response.
(5) If possible, link the information you need to store to images; it is easier for the brain to memorise images.
(6) Repeat the information more than once, either through visualisations, auditory input or written word.
(7) Avoid stressful situations and reduce your anxiety.
(8) Avoid alcohol and cigarette smoking.
(9) To retain written information, study for short periods with breaks in between.
(10) Take zinc supplements; zinc has been found to be helpful for memory.
(11) Take a vitamin-B complex.
(12) Eat healthy meals with abundant fresh vegetables, especially during study hours.
(13) Meditation and hypnotherapy reduce stress and anxiety and also help to improve memory.
(14) Do some memory exercises - practise with images, audio stimuli and writing to help you store information you need to retrieve later.

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