

Steps for Improving Your Memory

Start with the right attitude. You have to want to concentrate, understand and remember. Since wanting to remember is the basis for remembering, your intentions are crucial. If you do not plan to remember something, you will not remember it very well. Keep your mind on what you are studying and do not permit yourself to be distracted. Set your goals and stick to them.

Learn in an organized way. You will remember much more easily when you have a systematic, orderly overview of what you have learned. If you study each event as being isolated and never see the relationships between them, you will forget more quickly. Work to understand the overall significance of each course topic and realize that the section being studied is part of a whole part of the big picture.

Review immediately after learning. Summarize lecture notes and textbook reading. More than half of what you have learned is forgotten within 24 hours so review immediately while the material is still fresh in your mind, even if you only review for a few minutes.

Learn actively. Most learning time should be spent actively in self-testing and practice rather than passive rereading. While you read, underline important points and make marginal notes and summaries. Recite your notes out loud, use flashcards, visualize, and associate new material with things you already know.

Take your time. Complex learning like understanding new relationships or learning how to solve a problem requires longer periods of time for efficient learning. Reading the material and comprehending it are two different things so take your time and read carefully. Have a daily schedule for study and stick to it.

Mechanical or rote memorization. Simple tasks and anything you have to memorize word for word are better learned in short frequent practice sessions. Make up rhymes or sentences to help you remember.

Practice what you learn. In between the time you learn something and the time you are tested on it. Most forgetting takes place because people have not periodically practiced or review what they have learned.