



Enhance your Memory!

Let's face it- in this day and age, there are a lot of things to remember! Like “where did you leave those car keys?” and “did I feed Fido dinner?” Everyone forgets multiple things throughout the day, and with a head injury on top of it, a few memory tips would definitely prove useful! So let's look at a few things that we can all benefit from:

Getting Proper Sleep

Experts agree that you must have sufficient good sleep for a good memory. This is necessary to consolidate memories from the day and to help you be more alert and ready to learn in days to come. Some studies say that 8.5 hours is needed to perform at ones peak. This will also help lower your risk of cancer. Try to maintain a good sleep pattern by going to bed and waking up around the same time every day. Make sure that you have a comfortable sleeping environment. Minimize chances for distractions that could interfere with your ability to have an uninterrupted sleep. So if Fido takes up too much room, tell him to get his own bed!

Quick tips for a good sleep

- **Avoid coffee or tea and other sources of caffeine after the morning**
- **Avoid or cut out naps**
- **Try a relaxing activity before bed**
- **Alcohol can disrupt sleep patterns**
- **Leave your bed for sleeping in. Read or do other activities during the day in another room**

What Interests you? Go for it!

Who would guess that your favourite sports team or love for the arts could be such an important part of your mental health and memory function? Your brain will work hard at learning and understanding new concepts that you find interesting. The things that you are passionate for can help keep depression and stress at bay. This will have a substantial positive impact on your memory. Expanding your knowledge on these interests may even open up new opportunities to meet other people.

Got time for another beer? Maybe not

Heavy alcohol use damages your brain and causes memory loss. Limiting yourself to one or two drinks per day or eliminating the consumption of alcohol all together is a great way to help keep and improve your memory. Many rehabilitation experts agree that someone with a head injury should completely avoid alcohol.

Smoke break? Might be a good idea to skip it

Studies show that smokers don't have as good of a memory as non-smokers. Smoking is the cause of many health issues that negatively impact memory. Lighting up constricts blood vessels to the

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brain, starving it of oxygen. It's never too late to quit and your brain will thank you for it. Speak to your doctor about the best way to help you quit and get on a plan to succeed!

Try out these pointers to help you remember important things on a daily basis:

- use post-it notes to remember things like appointments and errands that you need to do. Post them anywhere- the front door, your spot at the kitchen table, your mirror, on your lunch bag in the fridge
- use the alarm on your cell phone for daily reminders
- always place your keys or important things in the same spot
- when parking in a parking lot, always park on same side of the entrance, one or two rows over. When you exit, always walk the same way and look for your car. If you are parking in a parking garage, don't forget to write down the number or letter corresponding to where you parked your vehicle
- get into a daily routine- get into the habit of checking your calendar first thing in the morning, then taking your pills, then checking your email...etc.
- keep a "to do" list on your cell phone if you have one and check it often. If not, purchase a small to-do list pad and keep it in your pocket or purse (Dollar stores or Wal-mart carry these)

Resources and Further Reading:

Nelson, Aaron. *Achieving Optimal Memory*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005
www.health.harvard.edu

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