

Health and Wellness: Memory Improvement

By Laura Jimenez, M.S.W.

While we learn many things in school, little if any time is spent on the best way to remember what we learn. Even though much has literally been written for centuries on this topic, this very helpful information still seems elusive. The basic premise of memory improvement is that most people already have a good memory but they just don't know how to use it properly. Rather than memory being associated with being smart or not smart, memory is actually a matter of knowing how the mind processes and remembers information, and learning certain techniques which secures that knowledge. Then, just like anything else in which you want to be good, practice!

How much could any of us improve any aspect of our lives if our memory was better? Would we be a better student, employee, sibling, friend or spouse? What areas of our lives could we improve –health, grades, income – the implications are enormous since the list is endless – this even includes mastering a foreign language!

Certainly how you treat your body by what you consume and how much you exercise plays a significant role in the sharpness of your memory. For example, eating fruits and vegetables high in folic acid, adding omega-3 fatty acids found in high-quality fish oil supplements (which help protect the brain against the cognitive deterioration typically associated with Alzheimer's disease) and exercising 3-5 times a week are three great places to start. But, in addition to that, what other natural ways can one do to improve memory?

Mnemonics are memory tools which differ vastly from traditional rote learning and repetition by working with the ways in which our brain absorbs information. Believe it or not, **creativity** is one of the major influences to remember anything. Therefore, by changing something to be remembered from boring into something exciting, colorful or different, it becomes that much easier to remember. By practicing this technique and others, remembering anything desired to be remembered for at least an hour a day, it will be possible to learn anything.

Note that an estimated 5.4 million people currently have Alzheimer's disease. Unless there is a significant medical breakthrough, conservatively it is projected that between 11-16 million people will have Alzheimer's by the year 2050. The implications herein are enormous.

This short article only scratches the surface. You are encouraged to make time to learn more about this topic (i.e., students can take advantage by reading on this topic over their [hopefully] slower summer months and adults should make time to read something on most days. One great place to start is by reading a 2011 book by Joshua Foer titled [Moonwalking With Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything](#).

Here are a few places to begin reading more on this topic:

- I. <http://buildyourmemory.com>
- II. http://www.salon.com/life/feature/2011/03/06/foer_moonwalking_with_einstein
- III. <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2006/06/20/simple-tricks-to-improve-your-memory.aspx>
- IV. http://www.alz.org/downloads/Facts_Figures_2011.pdf

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