

Strategies for Improving Memory

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we believe
in life well-lived.

Today's Talk

- My Background
- What is neuropsychology?
- Memory and normal aging
- What can I do to improve memory?



Background

PhD from Drexel University

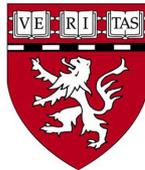


Internship at Emory University



EMORY
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

Fellowship at Harvard Medical School



What is neuropsychology?

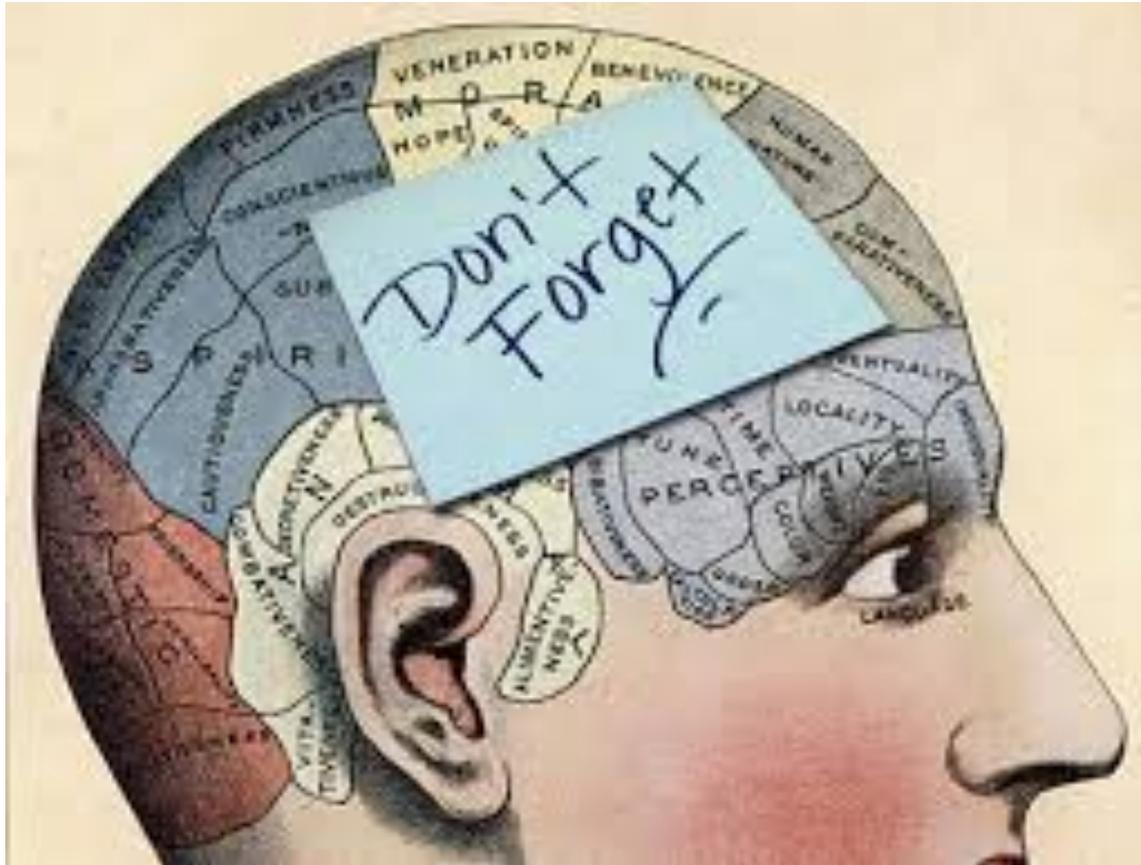
Purpose: Investigate why someone is experiencing changes in their thinking skills and/or behavior.



What is neuropsychology?

Common reasons people have a neuropsychological evaluation:

- Assist in evaluation of diagnoses such as dementia, stroke, concussion, or brain tumor
- Establish a baseline so changes in thinking skills can be monitored over time
- Help make decisions about safety, driving, working
- Guide treatment recommendations



Memory

Memory



- Factors to Consider:
 - What kinds of things do you have trouble remembering?
 - How often do these problems happen?
 - When did they begin?
 - Do they interfere with my ability to do everyday tasks?
 - Have other people also noticed these problems?

Beliefs About Aging & Memory Quiz

“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” As people age, they lose the ability to learn new things.

True or False?

Beliefs About Aging & Memory Quiz

The brain produces new brain cells early in life, but once you reach adulthood, the growth of new cells stops and your brain is no longer capable of producing new cells.

True or False?

Beliefs About Aging & Memory Quiz

Once your memory has begun to decline, the damage has been done, and there is nothing you can do about it.

True or False?

How to Improve Memory?

1. Attention

2. Reminders in your environment

3. Memory tricks

4. Lifestyle factors/health behaviors

Attention

“The true art of memory is the
art of **attention**”

Samuel Johnson



Attention: One Key to Improving Memory

- **Attention is the FIRST step of the memory formation process**
- **If you're not paying ATTENTION to information to begin with, chances are it will never be *remembered***

Penny Memory Test

How good is your memory? Which penny is correct?



Attention

- How do I improve my attention?
 - Minimize distractions around you
 - Enhancing focus



Attention: Minimize Distractions

- Set environment up for success!
 - Minimize distractions
 - Avoid interruptions



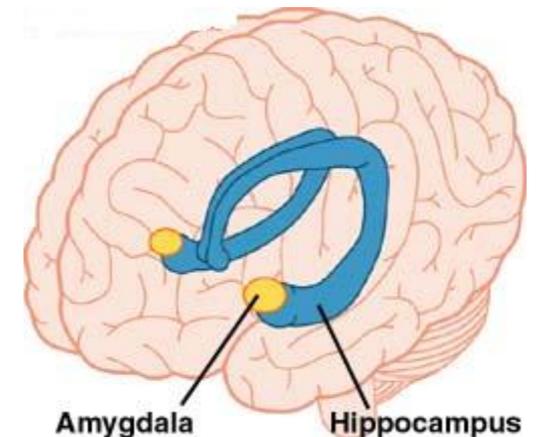
Attention: Focus

- Slow down, notice details of environment
- Brain breaks
- Work at times of day you are most attentive



Attention: Focus

- **Get Interested!**
 - More likely to remember something you are interested in.
 - When having conversation with someone:
 - **Ask questions**
 - **Repeat back information**
 - **Think about how the information makes you feel**



How to Improve Memory?

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Reminders

- Devices that you can carry with you or place in your home to help you to remember information



Memory Notebook



- Schedule appointments and activities
- To-Do List
- Write down anything you want to remember (e.g., conversations, ideas)

Memory Notebook

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 20

30/346

NOVEMBER: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30

DECEMBER: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31

JANUARY: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31

FEBRUARY: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29

Notes

12:00 AM 0000
1:00 0100
2:00 0200
3:00 0300
4:00 0400
5:00 0500
6:00 0600
7:00 0700
8:00 0800
9:00 0900
10:00 1000
11:00 1100
12:00 PM 1200
1:00 1300
2:00 1400
3:00 1500
4:00 1600
5:00 1700
6:00 1800
7:00 1900
8:00 2000
9:00 2100
10:00 2200
11:00 2300

THURSDAY
JANUARY 21

21/346

MARCH: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31

APRIL: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

MAY: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31

JUNE: S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Notes

12:00 AM 0000
1:00 0100
2:00 0200
3:00 0300
4:00 0400
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6:00 0600
7:00 0700
8:00 0800
9:00 0900
10:00 1000
11:00 1100
12:00 PM 1200
1:00 1300
2:00 1400
3:00 1500
4:00 1600
5:00 1700
6:00 1800
7:00 1900
8:00 2000
9:00 2100
10:00 2200
11:00 2300

Memory Notebook

- Bring it with you!
- Create a habit!
 - Review notebook in morning and night
- Keep it in the same **VISIBLE** place in your home

Memory Notebook

- Post-It Notes



Pill Box



- Choose type that works for you
- Associate time you take your medications with something you do routinely.
- Organize pills at beginning of each week.

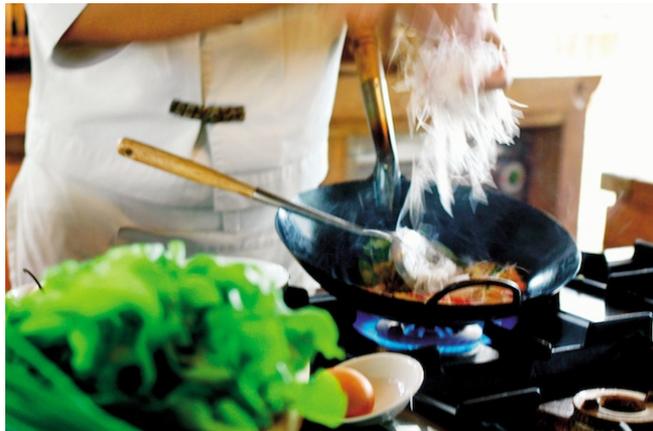


Electronic Devices

- Alarms



WatchMinder



www.thiscaringhome.com



Reminder Rosie Alarm

Electronic Devices

- Digital Voice Recorder
 - Record doctor's appointments, meetings
 - Can go back later and listen again



How to Improve Memory?

1. Attention
2. Reminders in your environment
3. Memory tricks
4. Lifestyle factors/health behaviors

Memory Tricks

- Memory tricks are strategies that come from **within your own mind.**



Memory Tricks

- Repetition!

- ❖ When you meet someone new and they tell you their name- repeat their name back to them. Try to use their name several times throughout your conversation with them
- ❖ When reading a news story you want to remember, don't just read it once, read it again.
- ❖ When you are having an important conversation with a family member, colleague, or doctor repeat back what they just told you to strengthen your memory for information.

Memory Tricks

- Visual Imagery



A picture really is worth a thousand words

Memory Tricks

- Visual Imagery

- Turning information we read or hear into a picture

- Create a visual scene, like a short movie in your head.



Mr. Barr



Memory Tricks

- Visual Imagery

- Remembering to pay water bill

- Picture white water rafting to the bank



- Where did you park your car? 2B

- Picture 2 bumblebees stinging my car wheel



How to Improve Memory?

1. Attention
2. Reminders in your environment
3. Memory Tricks
4. Lifestyle factors/health behaviors

Healthy Habits

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Cognitive Stimulation



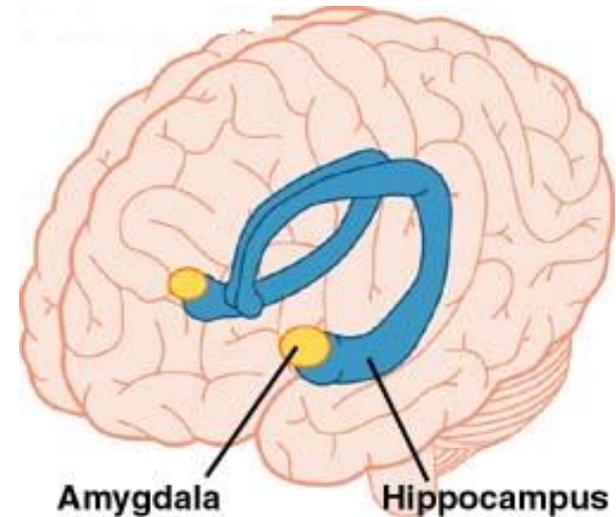
Healthy Habits: Exercise



↑ Memory

2% increase of
hippocampus

1.4%
shrinkage of
hippocampus



Healthy Habits: Exercise

- 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic (brisk walking)/ week

OR

- 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic exercise (jogging/running)/ week

AND

- Muscle strengthening activities 2 or more days per week

Recommendations from Harvard Medical School Special Health Report



Healthy Habits: Sleep

- Sleep is essential for memory
- Some sleep medications can impair memory, so should be avoided when possible.

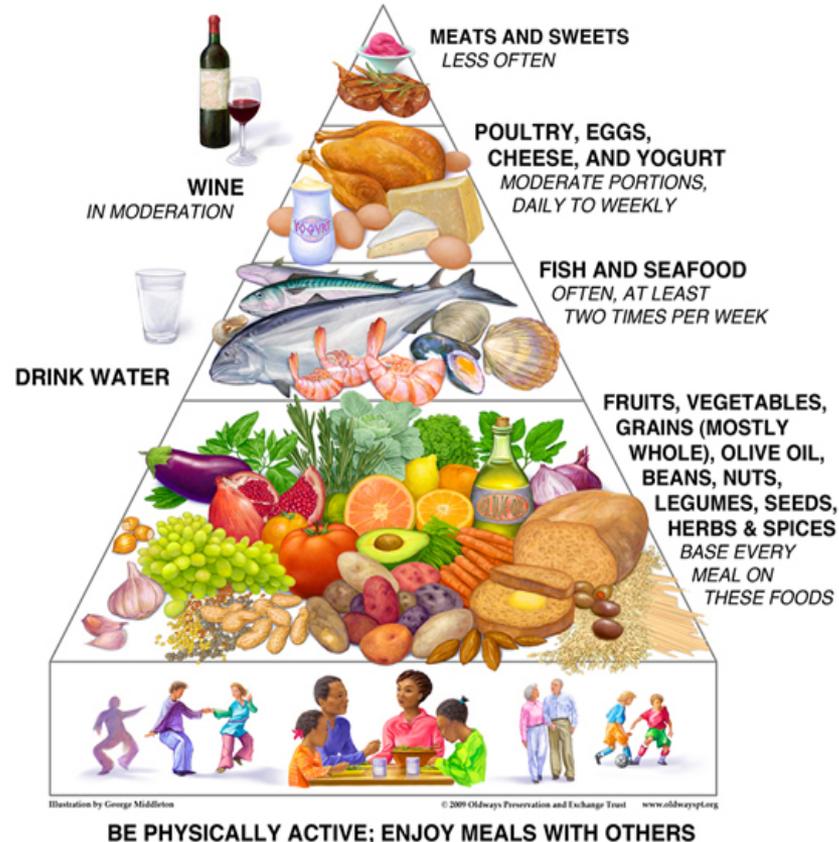


Recommendations from Harvard Medical School Special Health Report

Healthy Habits: Nutrition

Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

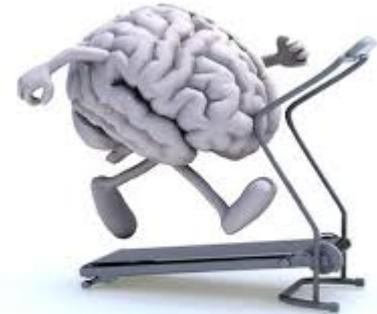
A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating



Recommendations from Harvard Medical School Special Health Report

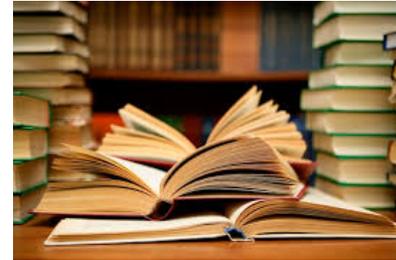
Healthy Habits: Cognitive Stimulation

- Keep your mind active!
- Lifelong habit of learning and engaging in mentally challenging activities keeps your brain in shape!



Healthy Habits: Cognitive Stimulation

- Reading
- Crossword puzzles
- Taking a class
- Attending cultural events
- Meeting with friends regularly
- Playing a musical instrument
- Learning a new language
- Dancing
- Working on home improvement projects
- Learning a new craft or hobby



Recap: How to Improve Memory?

1. Attention
2. Reminders in your environment
3. Memory Tricks
4. Lifestyle factors/health behaviors

Thank you!

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