Ways to Improve Your Memory

Good Luck with Finals!
Stressed out about studying and finding it hard to learn all of the material? There are ways you can improve your memory, not only short-term memory but long-term memory as well. There is no use in memorizing something if you won’t be able to remember it later. Exams are a stressful time for students, here are some things you can do to improve your memory.

**What is Memory**

Memory is our ability to encode, store, retain and recall information and past experiences in the human brain. It can be thought of in general terms as the use of past experience to affect or influence our current behavior.

**Study Tips to Improve Memory**

- Read out loud instead of simply reading.
- Teach someone else what you have learned.
- Create mental associations.
- Draw diagrams and use mind maps.
- Create flashcards for a quick memory buzz.
- Listen to the correct type of music, some genres elevate your mood increasing productivity.
- Practice, Practice, Practice! Review the information at least 3 times to optimize the recall of information during an exam.
**Exercise**

Any activity that’s aerobic, like biking, swimming, or playing tennis, can reduce stress by the release of endorphins which serves as a natural antidepressant and therefore improves memory.

Hand eye Coordination exercise such as volleyball, soccer and basketball improves your working memory more so than metabolic exercises.

Regular exercise helps to keep your brain young through the production of new brain cells.

**Music**

Studies have shown that listening to music before studying or performing a task can be beneficial as it improves attention, memory, and even your ability to do mental math.

Many researchers, as well as students, who think listening to music helps memory have called the practice the “Mozart Effect.” The kind of music that is most beneficial when studying depends on the individual.

4 Gold, B. P. et al. (2013) Pleasurable music affects reinforcement learning according to the listener. Frontiers in Psychology. Vol. 4

**Memory and the Brain**

**Structures of the Brain related to Memory**

Many areas of the brain are involved in memory processes as you can see in the diagram. The main structured of the brain related to memory is the **Medial Temporal Lobe** including the **Hippocampus** and the **Cortex**. These areas are responsible for long term memory which is quite important when it comes to recall of information for exams.
When trying to improve your memory it is best to try and avoid heavy drinking. It is associated with long-term impairment in sustained attention and working memory.

Cannabis also causes severe impairments to your short and long term memory. ¹

**Benefits to Memory**

**Sleep**

A full night sleep results in better memory consolidation then a whole night awake studying

A nap (siesta) during the day results in better memory consolidation then a whole day of wakefulness studying. A Nap should be around 30 minutes. ²

**Food**

**Chewing gum:** Stimulating aroma and caffeine enhance blood-flow to the brain. Caffeine and herbal chewing gum can improve cognitive function. It improves concentration and memory, both short-term memory and long-term memory. Chewing gum helps in masticatory function, improving working memory and concentration. Chewing gum helps with stress resistance by lowering blood pressure. ³

**Chocolate:** Flavanol-rich chocolate is an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. It allows normal blood flow and improves cognitive function. By lowering blood pressure, working memory performance is improved.

Chocolate also has caffeine which helps with alertness, helping a person be more awake and concentrate even when they are sleep deprived. ⁴

Brands to look out for include, Lindt, Godiva, Green & Blacks, Vivani and Pascha.

**Avocados:** have Vitamin B, which help the body to get energy from food improving concentration.

**Blueberries:** Contains Vitamin C and Vitamin K and fiber, which helps the brain from degeneration and stress.

**Broccoli:** Contains Vitamin K and Choline, which helps improve memory.

**Salmon:** Contains Omega 3 fatty acids, which helps improve memory and improves focus.

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