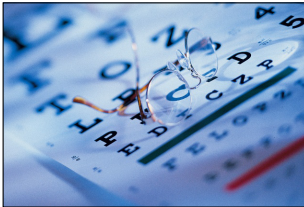


What Can Affect My Memory?

In the absence of some brain disease or disorder, memory may be affected by many different things, including:

Vision

- Not wearing your glasses or wearing a bad prescription



Hearing

- Not wearing your hearing aid

Environment

- Moving to a new living space
- Moving to a new town or different area of town

Medications

- Blood pressure medications
- Sedatives
- Muscle relaxers



Emotions

- Stress
- Grief
- Depression

Nutrition

- Dehydration



How Does My Memory Work?

Your memory is divided into three distinct yet equally important parts:

Sensory Memory

- Brings in all the information received through your senses – everything you see, touch, taste, hear, or smell

Short-term Memory

- Also called your working memory, handles 7-10 pieces of information for a couple of minutes

Long-term Memory

- The most important information – can last a lifetime

What about Learning?

If you don't learn something, you will never remember it. Determine which type of learner you are for different tasks, and try to use that to your advantage. Types of learning include:

Auditory

- Needs to hear something to understand it



Visual

- Needs to see something to understand it

Kinesthetic

- Needs to do something to understand it

Strategies to Help Improve Your Memory

Many people think that making lists or coming up with rhymes to remember something is a crutch. NOT SO! These are very effective memory strategies that may help you remember better.

Concentration

- Putting attention, priority, and effort into one task at a time

Association

- Developing links or cues to remember something in addition to using visualization

Repetition

- Making lists, taking notes, or putting things in a particular order

Relaxation

- Clearing your mind and allowing time for it to do the work you need it to do

What Else Can I Do?



Anything you do to stretch your brain and make it work is good "exercise" for your memory. Maybe it's a word puzzle, such as a crossword; maybe it's a conversation with another person about something you've read; maybe it's a continuing education course. Whatever you do, make it challenging for your brain!

The Truth about Memory

Myth: I'm getting older – it's normal for my memory to decline.

Truth: While some decline may be expected as you age, that doesn't mean you can't do something about it. In the absence of a brain disease, such as Alzheimer's Disease, many types of memory loss may be treatable or reversible.

Myth: There is nothing I can do to help remember better.

Truth: In addition to memory strategies to help you remember, your brain can exercise. Exercise for your mind builds mental muscle just like exercise for your body builds muscles. Try new and different learning methods; solve riddles and word puzzles; have stimulating conversations with others, and do anything else that makes your brain work.



Myth: I misplace my keys and remote control a lot; I must be getting Alzheimer's Disease.

Truth: Often we lose things like this because we break a habit – something we do regularly, day-in, day-out – like putting your keys or remote control in the same place. You don't need to remember where your keys and remote are because they are always in the same place. Identify the habits you have, and maximize them. If you don't have habits, form them to help remember better.

For more information about Master of Memory or other programs offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, contact your county Extension agent:

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Master of Memory is a six-lesson series to help older adults understand how memory works, identify ways to improve memory and pinpoint things in everyday life that may affect memory.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating