

## MEMORY TECHNIQUES



There are different approaches to learning. What works for you, may not work for that person in class who picks their nose. Experiment with the below strategies to discover where you succeed with memory.

Memory Techniques can be broken into categories:

**Organization** – Information that is organized is easier to learn and recall

**Get Moving** – Learning is an ACTIVE process, so get all those senses involved, including your body

**Brain Power** – Work with your memory, not against it

And it's good to be flexible. Incorporating a variety of techniques into your studying is best.

### ORGANIZATION

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#### CHOOSE WISELY

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- The point of studying is not to drown yourself in information
- You will learn so much. SO MUCH. Not all of it is important
- The key is to identify the important information you should know from the fluff
- When reading your textbook, pay attention to chapter previews, review sections/summaries, headings
- Words that are *italicized* or in **bold**
- While in lecture, if your professor emphasizes or writes any information on the board... it is probably important
- This is the information you want to study

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## MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

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- The information you're learning can be attached to something you already know
- Here, you translate information given to you into a form that makes sense to you
- It's about connecting the "parts" to the "whole"
- You are more likely to recall information if it is part of a group

## GET MOVING

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## ACTION

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- Your body can be an important study tool
- Sit on the edge of your seat and lean forward on the table
- Or stand while you study (it is harder to fall asleep)
- Or walk!
- Movement helps with focus and keeping energy levels up
- Use hand gestures
- Study like you're giving a presentation and need to keep the audience's attention

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## RELAX

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- When you're relaxed, you can learn and recall information easier
- Being relaxed does not mean you are sleepy
- It means you are free of tension
- This is the best state your brain can be in to take in new information and make it meaningful
- Do some breathing exercises
- Eat and drink water
- Go for a walk, light jog, or do some stretching
- Listen to Enya
- Do what you need to do so you can do your best studying

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## DRAW PICTURES

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- It is easier to recall information when it is visualized
- Diagrams, pictures, cartoons, charts and tables
- The part of your brain associated with the "visual" is different than the part associated with the "verbal"
- This means the same piece of information can be stored two different ways
- We tend to remember pictures better than words

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## RECITE, RECITE, RECITE

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- By speaking information aloud again and again, you learn that information two different ways
- Physically — through the act of speaking
- Auditory — by listening to yourself speak
- Studying is all about creating different, well-used pathways in your brain that will allow you to access information when you need it
- Speaking aloud also gauges your understanding of the material
- It is one thing to tell yourself you understand something
- It is another to hear that understanding
- Repetition is important because it is what deepens the pathway to where information is stored in your brain
- And make it fun!
- Have a great accent or funny voice?
- Study using those or even sing
- This helps with focus because you just made studying a lot more fun

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## WRITE. IT. DOWN

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- The physical act of writing helps you remember information, even if you never look at it again (which I hope you do)
- Writing engages a different kind of learning and recall than speech, reading or listening
- You think about what you write
- Does it make sense? Is this sentence complete? How's my spelling?
- Writing is also what will be expected of you at test time
- Remember how studying is just rehearsing for tests?

- Write the same piece of information over and over
- Do you use Q-cards?
- Rather than speaking the answer on the other side, write it

It is good to use your body when you study. Learning and using your memory is an active process — you remember what you do.

### **GET THINKING**

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#### EMOTIONS

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- One of your best friends in life, is your amygdala
- This is the part of your brain that says “HEY! I’m working now and gonna make you feel all these feels,” whenever you experience a strong emotion
- When you are excited (a strong emotion) about a topic, your amygdala does a dance and sings “This information is wonderful and important! We will not forget it!!”
- Yes, not all subjects are created equal
- If you find a subject boring, try your best to generate interest in it
- If that isn’t possible, try and make it meaningful to you
- Do you need the course for your major? Minor? To get into another school?
- And be aware of your emotions prior to a study session
- Feeling glum about studying?
- Then do something so you’re not feeling glum
- You are a better learning when you’re feeling good

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#### OVERLEARN

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- Know everything there is to know about a concept
- Pick it apart
- Related information is all stored in the same area of your brain
- If you come across a question on a test and don’t immediately know the answer, take a second...
- What else do you know?
- Accessing related information increases the chance of recalling the information you need

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## Learn Long-term, not Short-term

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- Short-term memory is just that, short
- It is learning something only long enough to use it
- This is not what you want
- Reviewing after a study session can help direct information into your long-term memory
- Reviewing creates pathways and pathways are how you will access the information when you need it

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## STUDY AT PEAK TIMES

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- Our best changes throughout the day
- Study your most difficult subjects when you feel most alert and focused
- These will typically take more time to learn, so do it when you're feeling good

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## DIVIDE LEARNING

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- Try your best to avoid marathon study sessions
- An hour is about the maximum amount of time your brain can work well
- Take breaks. Laundry, wash the dishes, go for a walk. Your brain is still reviewing and digesting the information you fed it
- Taking regular breaks also makes you more productive
- If you don't take breaks, you will get tired and your brain will find a way to shutdown for a rest
- Study for an hour, take a break
- An hour of studying is also easier
- When studying is easier, you are more likely to do it and do it well
- However, if you are motivated and productive, don't end that
- Stopping harms that focus and productivity, which you worked so hard at building

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## COMBINE TECHNIQUES

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- These memory techniques work best when used together
- We all learn differently, so experiment and discover what works best for you
- If your attitude is that psychology is hard... acknowledge how you feel
- Break psychology study breaks into smaller chunks
- Try and find something interesting or meaningful in the content
- Or after reading a sociology chapter...try to draw a picture of the main concepts
- By using multiple memory techniques, you are forced to learn through multiple sense (sight, touch, sound, etc.)
- This stores the same piece of information in multiple locations in your brain

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