

10 TIPS FOR MEMORIZATION



- 1. Focus.** If you don't consciously focus on what you need to remember, there's little hope you'll be able to recall it. Minimize distractions and pay attention. If you need to memorize something complicated, focus on the most important pieces first; add details later.
- 2. Make connections.** Link something new to something you already know, ideally when you first get the new information. Association provides a stronger memory bond.
- 3. Use all your senses.** Each of your five senses (i.e., sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell) accesses different areas of your brain, so use as many as possible to help remember something. Create a strong memory by attending to details (e.g., the colour, texture, sound, smell). Robust memories are easier to recall than vague ones.
- 4. Cluster information.** For many years, researchers have reported that the human brain can only memorize about 7 items at once (see Miller's 1956 "[Magical Number 7](#)" article). Chunking or grouping similar items into larger categories permits memorizing those categories instead of individual items – phone numbers are a good example of this, generally in clusters of 3 or 4 numbers so you can memorize 2 clusters rather than 7 numbers.
- 5. Use a Mnemonic (neh-mon-ik).** [Mnemonics](#) are memory techniques, including some already on this list. Sometimes the first letters of a sentence (even a silly or illogical one) can help you recall complex information (e.g., "My very earnest mother just sent us new plants" was a useful way to remember the order of the planets until Pluto was recently demoted; now it's been adjusted to "My very earnest Mother just served us nectarines!"). Other sentences, acronyms, rhymes, jingles, and songs have been used to memorize colours in the rainbow, musical notes, and countless other complex combinations.
- 6. Use a progressive technique.** Add new items while repeating the full list so you don't forget the first ones by the time you get to the last item (e.g., memorize Item 1, then add Item 2 and repeat the full list – Items 1 and 2. Then add Item 3, repeating list with Items 1 – 3).
- 7. Repeat, repeat, repeat.** You're more likely to remember something you've seen or heard several times. Revisit facts or items you need to memorize; regularly review, recite, and apply the material, each time making a conscious effort to remember it.
- 8. Accommodate your learning style.** As visual learners learn through pictures, try doodling, mind maps, or drawing images to assist recall. On the other hand, auditory learners learn through hearing or speaking, so saying items out loud may enhance your memory. Kinaesthetic or tactile learners, however, learn through hands-on practice or physical activity; if you learn best by "doing," try to watch demonstrations or physically practice to remember it (e.g., walking a route, writing notes, highlighting, assembling a model).
- 9. Customize your approach.** Because everyone is different, some memory techniques may work better than others for you; experiment a bit to discover methods that suit you. Sometimes a physical reminder works best (e.g., string around your finger, wearing your watch on the opposite wrist, leaving out an empty pill bottle, or placing a token in one of your pockets or in front of you at a meeting). If you constantly use technology, it may be helpful to set alarms or reminders on your phone, watch, calendar, or computer, or use flags for important emails. Click here for more [Quick Memory Tips](#) – choose techniques that suit your lifestyle.
- 10. Strengthen your memory.** Memory skills can be enhanced – and they need to be exercised. Choose to learn new things; playing simple memory games to boost your capacity (e.g., Poker, Go Fish, Bridge, Mastermind). Here's a free online [concentration game](#) to get started!



imagine ♦ achieve ♦ excel



604.856.2386
info@lifestrategies.ca
www.lifestrategies.ca