



Eight simple memory tips to keep your brain sharp for tomorrow

Like many active older adults, you probably tossed out conventional ideas of retirement years ago. Instead, you're anticipating the time of your life, and you don't want anything, including forgetfulness, to interfere with your adventures.

The good news is that there are many winning habits you can adopt to optimize your cognitive health, one of the top concerns of older Americans. With June designated as [Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month](#), take this opportunity to explore eight tips for keeping your brain sharp.

1. Unclutter your brain

To preserve mental reserves, avoid multitasking or other distracting activities like constantly pulling out your smart phone and checking messages. Also, make a conscious effort to create specific places for your belongings and put items away as soon as you use them. Day planners and calendars can also free up mental space, especially if you take advantage of online tools like [Google calendar](#) or the calendar on your smart phone, which allow you to create recurring reminders or events easily.

2. Repeat, repeat, repeat

To recall something you've just heard, read or done (like placing an item where it doesn't belong), reinforce the connection by repeating it out loud or writing it down. Another memory trick: use [mnemonic devices](#) like acronyms (such as RICE [rest, ice, compression, elevation] to remember how to treat injuries).

3. Lighten your emotional load

Stress, anxiety or depression can hinder concentration and decision-making. Talking with supportive friends and family or taking part in relaxing activities like meditation or [yoga](#) can help.

4. Book a medical appointment

If you're troubled by your struggles to remember information, don't delay in visiting your doctor. Some easily treatable medical conditions, like vitamin B-12 deficiency or a thyroid disorder, can contribute to forgetfulness and confusion. Also, ask your doctor to review your medications, as certain drugs, including those used to treat high cholesterol, can cause memory loss.



5. Overhaul your diet

You probably know that eating [nutritious food](#) can reduce your chance of developing heart disease, but do you realize that [heart-healthy diets](#), like the [DASH](#) or [Mediterranean food plans](#), can also benefit your brain? In addition to eating lots of fruits, vegetables, and healthy grains and proteins, boost cognitive health by going easy on sweets, fried and processed foods, and alcohol.



6. Shake a leg

Working out (ideally for at least 150 minutes per week) can make your brain cells happy! Several studies associate [physical activity](#) like walking with better brain function, and some studies suggest that it triggers the release of a protein that promotes healthy nerve cells in the brain. Even if your mobility has changed over the years, you can still break a sweat! Loads of [exercises have been adapted](#), allowing you to dance, walk or work out with weights.

7. Expand your learning

One of the most enjoyable ways to sharpen your thinking ability and memory skills is to take up mentally stimulating activities like quilting or digital photography. [Emerging evidence](#) shows that playing a musical instrument might help prevent dementia, while [this study](#) suggests that formal computerized brain training can enhance memory, reasoning and information-processing speed.

8. Hobnob with others

If you're a people person, you're in luck! Mounting research suggests that socializing can preserve mental function and memory, especially when paired with mentally stimulating activity, according to the [Alzheimer's Association](#). So enhance your social life by volunteering, joining like-minded recreational groups or scheduling regular lunches with friends. And if you've given up the car keys, know that it doesn't have to mean long evenings alone watching TV. Moving to a [senior living community can jump-start your social network](#). Between eating meals in communal dining rooms and taking part in group activities, you can meet and mingle with dozens of people each day without ever leaving home!



Like most older Americans, you want to remember meaningful events without having to be reminded, such as your granddaughter's sixth birthday party. Diminish your concerns by incorporating these brain-boosting strategies into your life this June—and every day!

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