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Share the Wellness Tip

Train Your Brain To Help Prevent Memory Drain

Everyone's been through it: You know you've met that person before, but you can't recall his or her name. Or maybe you can't remember where you parked your car. By learning certain mental tricks, you may be able to make these lapses a distant memory. Practicing certain mental strategies can improve your ability to recall names, dates and other information.

-  **Keep up-to-date.** Read the newspaper or listen to the radio. Talk with others about what you've learned; this helps seal in memories. And social interaction fights forgetfulness.
-  **Make a note.** Write down important information such as appointments, contact information and medication schedules.
-  **Make to-do lists** and plan your days ahead of time. Review them twice per day.
- Do the math.** Count out change or balance your checkbook by hand.
- Ease stress.** Incorporate meditation or other relaxation techniques into your schedule. Anxiety can cause memory lapses.
-  **Turn off the TV.** Pick up a book instead.
- Work it out.** Physical activity helps your brain as well as your body. It increases blood flow to the brain and reduces risk factors for memory loss.
-  **Here is an important tip: normal memory problems do not affect your everyday living.**

If you forget where you put your keys, you probably just need to get better organized. However, if you forget what keys are used for or how to unlock doors, talk to your health care provider.

Other tip-offs that a memory problem may require professional attention include:

-  Forgetting how to carry out everyday tasks, such as handling money or paying bills
-  Not being able to learn new things, such as how to operate a new microwave
-  Not recalling the names of loved ones

Sources: *American Psychological Association; Helpguide.org*

