

Five Strategies to Improve Your Memory - Transcript

Link to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/1aZMjbFN3Tw>

In high school, you may have gotten away with memorizing everything. Repeating information over and over again works, but it's not effective. In university, you'll be tested on so much more content and at much deeper levels. You can study smarter by applying efficient strategies.

Chunk the Information

Chunking is a memory strategy where you organize and group information. This helps you to cut down on the number of items in your short-term memory.

Let's say you had to remember this string of 10 numbers. You can group them like a phone number.

Now the string goes from being 10 to three items.

For your courses, you might group information into similar concepts. For example, when studying for a Biology course, you might group specific organs into the systems they are involved in.

For Math and Physics courses, you might group equations together based on their applications.

Chunking helps you to organize information and make it more meaningful.

Create Mnemonics

Mnemonics are tools that help you remember large chunks of information. You can do this by making acronyms or visual stories.

OCEAN is an example of an acronym that people use to remember the Big Five personality traits.

Green Bananas Dance For Apples is a visual story that tells you the line notes in the bass clef. The first letter of each word you say gives the order of the notes.

Engage in Self-referent Encoding

Chunking and mnemonics work because they help you encode less amounts of information at once. This is great, but self-referent encoding is even better. Create more neural pathways with memories by connecting your learning to you! This gives you more cues to retrieve information.

Make the information personally meaningful and interesting! Are you learning about classical conditioning? Connect it back to how you cross the street to avoid dogs. Are you learning about digestion? Try going through each of the steps the next time you have a meal.

Practice and Overlearn

Putting information in your brain is great, but you need to access it. Test yourself and see if you can apply it. Study actively: Solve problems without looking at your notes, summarize key points in your own words, and participate in study groups. This helps you identify where you need to refresh your knowledge. The more you engage with the material, the better you will be at retrieving and applying it.

Think you've mastered the concepts and skills? Overlearn by continuing to practice! This will build your confidence and increase your likelihood of success on a test.

Use Distributed Practice

Distributed Practice is a studying strategy where you space out your studying. Cramming does not work! You're more likely to retain information if you study over longer periods of time. It's better to have nine 30-minute study sessions over a month than it is to have one big four-and-a-half-hour study session. This is because other information that you're trying to learn is less likely to compete for your attention. Plus, you'll have more time.

Dedicate different days to study for your courses so that you can focus on them. This will decrease the amount of interference between memories.

Practice doesn't necessarily make perfect, but it does make better retention. Apply these five strategies in your studies and work out your brain.