

# Making the Most of Your Memory



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[www.cognitiverepairkit.ca](http://www.cognitiverepairkit.ca)



# Today's road map

- User's guide to memory
- What happens to memory as we age?
- How can memory be improved?



# What is memory?



- Brain records experiences for later use
- Not a filing cabinet; more like a 3D fishing net
- Memories are stored in networks of cells throughout the brain
  - “Cells that fire together, wire together” - D.O. Hebb (native Nova Scotian)
  - Memory ‘trace’ = network of connections made by cells working together

# Can you remember?



- What did you have for dinner on Sunday?
- Where did you go to high school?
- What was the name of your principal?
- What is the capital of Saskatchewan?
- Where is the 'b' on the computer keyboard?
- How do you ride a bicycle?

# We have many types of memories

Episodes – recent and remote

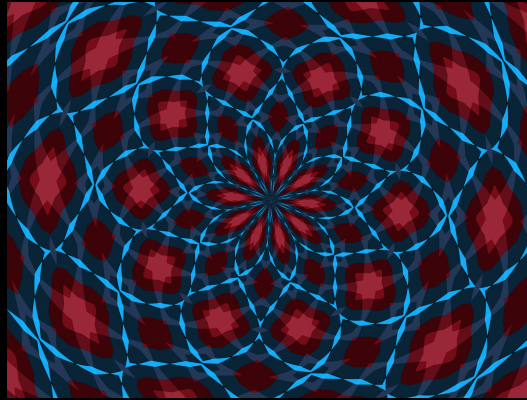


Facts and words



Procedures and skills





2. Recording



3. Retrieving



1. Receiving

The three R's to a good memory

# Receiving

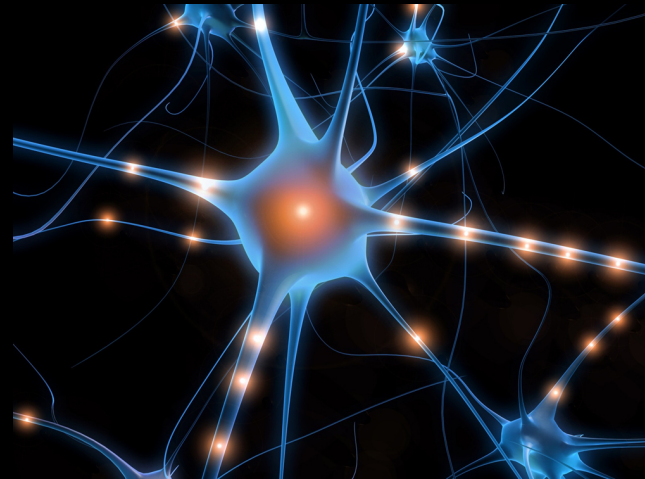


- The brain is always receiving information
- Critical element = attention and processing
  - Processing to put material into own organization
  - Connect it with what you know
- The more processing, the stronger the memory



# Recording

- Memories “laid down” via structural changes between brain cells
- These changes take time (months to years)
- Easily interrupted
  - Brain injury
  - ECT
  - Medications
  - Lack of sleep



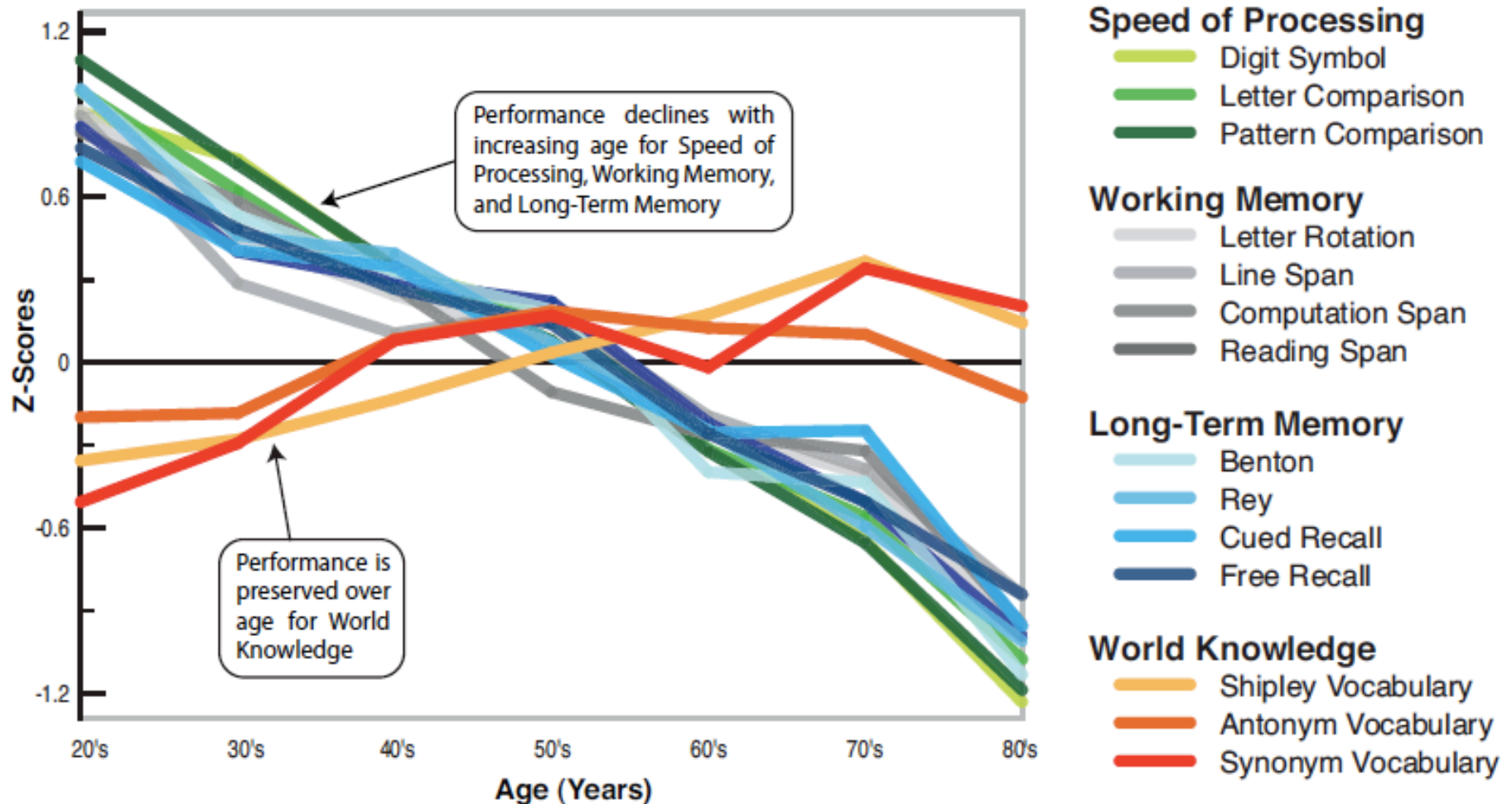
# Retrieving

- Retrieval = active process of recreating the information
- More processing at receiving can boost cues for retrieval
- Each retrieval success = more recording strength





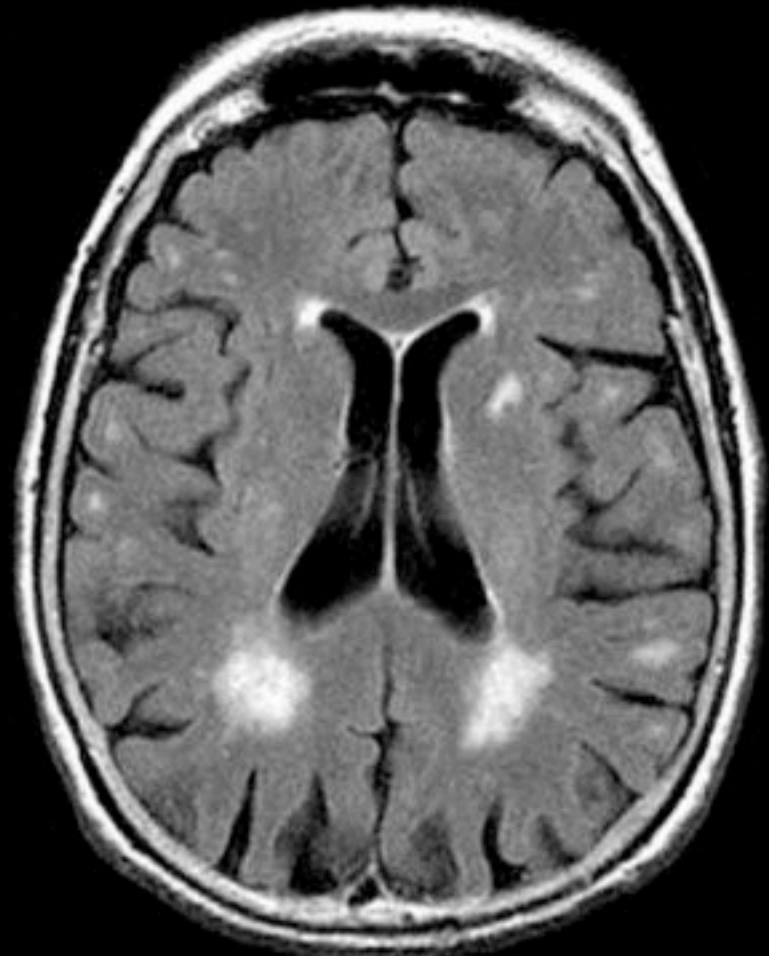
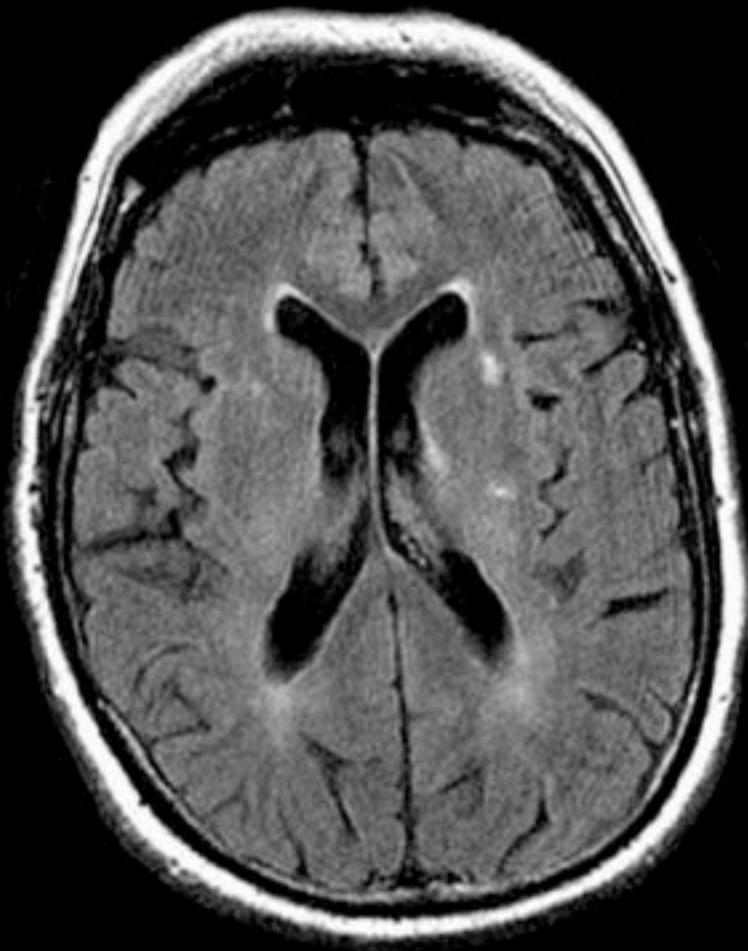
# Memory changes are common in healthy aging

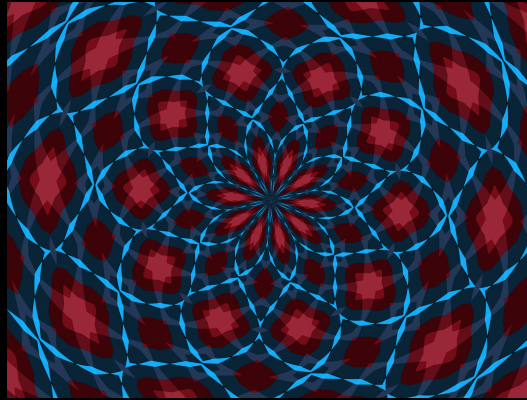


# The aging brain



# Disrupted connections





2. Recording



3. Retrieving



1. Receiving

These changes affect all steps

Good News,  
Everyone!





# Memory can be improved!

- Good memory is a skill that can be cultivated
- BUT, it takes
  - Understanding how memory works
  - Practice, practice, practice



# Possible strategies



Internal

External



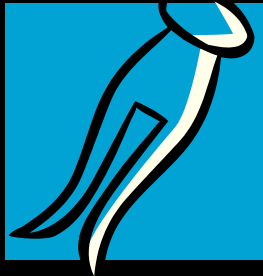
# Better Receiving

- Decide to remember
- Process 'richly', link to your own knowledge
- Can use mnemonics, pegs to link info

The image shows a musical staff with two systems. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The notes are: F (treble), A (treble), C (treble), E (treble) in the first measure; and E (bass), G (bass), B (bass), D (bass) in the second measure. The second system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The notes are: F (treble), A (treble), C (treble), E (treble) in the first measure; and E (bass), G (bass), B (bass), D (bass) in the second measure. The lyrics 'All Cars Eat Gas' are written below the first system, and 'Good Burritos Don't Fall Apart' are written below the second system.

F A C E Every Good Boy Does Fine

All Cars Eat Gas Good Burritos Don't Fall Apart



# Mnemonics

- Peg system good for sequences or lists to remember – e.g., passwords
  - Find a familiar phrase, song, sequence, rhyme
  - “Peg” it to what you want to remember
- Visualization also helps!
  - Placing to-be-remembered items in a familiar place



# Let's try it

- You need the following items from the grocery store on the way home:
  - Peas
  - Chicken
  - Milk
  - Ice cream
- How would you remember them?

# Let's try it

- First letter acronym
  - Peas
  - Chicken
  - Milk
  - Ice cream
- Visualization

# Other strategies for better receiving

- Did I turn off the iron? “See and say”
- What was I just reading? PQRST
  - Preview, question, read, summarize, test

# Let's try it



## How online social schedulers are reinventing the classroom

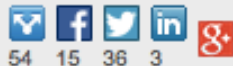
**ZOSIA BIELSKI**

The Globe and Mail

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3 comments



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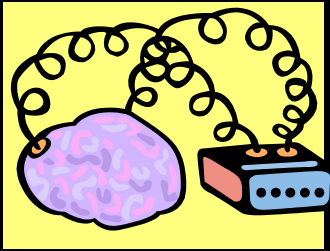
AA



Want in to that psych tutorial with your bff Madison this fall?

Online "social schedulers" like WikiRoster, Scheedule and Koofers help university and high-school students figure out who's in their class – and encourage them to customize timetables so they can share lectures with friends. Often linked to Facebook, the new interactive tools let kids quickly map who is taking what and when as soon as itineraries are sent out in late summer. The websites help students co-ordinate their courses and breaks as well as study sessions.





# Better Recording



Sleep

Exercise



Decrease stress

# *Better Retrieving*

- “Spaced” retrieval - practice retrieving info
  - Start with short intervals
  - Gradually lengthen time
- Tip of the Tongue? Use cues to provide link to information
  - Alphabet
  - Context – time, place
- Let it go – no one is perfect!

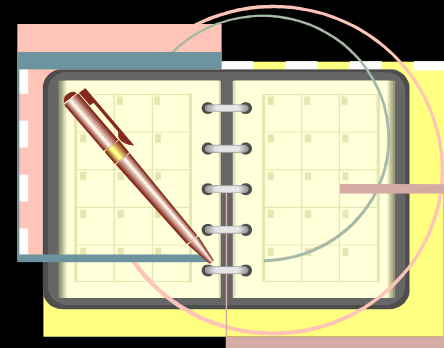


Let's try it



# External strategies

- Write it down – calendars, notes, diaries
- Need to make habits
- Specific help:
  - alarms, pill boxes
  - Message centre



Remember?



# Wrapping it up

- 3R's to a good memory
- Receiving strategies
- Recording strategies
- Retrieving strategies
- Start with 1 strategy and practice!

A12 Friday, January 15, 1999

**FRANK & ERNEST**



Thanks for your attention  
Interested in getting involved?  
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[www.dal.ca/eskes](http://www.dal.ca/eskes)

# Websites and References

- [http://www.helpguide.org/life/improving\\_memory.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/improving_memory.htm)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/tvradio/programmes/memory/programme.shtml>
- <http://www.baycrest.org/memoryandaging/main.html>

