

Memory Preservation

Presented by the Sigma Sigma Phi Omicron Theta-Ivins Additional Site Chapter

As you age, it is an unfortunate fact that your ability to recall things from memory begins to deteriorate. However, studies have shown there are things you can do to help improve and protect your memory well into your later years.



- **Socialize:** Active participation in family and community activities has been shown to not only improve memory function, but your mood as well. Spend time doing hobbies with other people. If you live alone and far from others, engage in daily face to face conversations online or over the phone with your friends and family.
- **Use Memory Aids:** Memory aids can be used to train your brain to remember things better. Establish a “To Do” list and daily routine. Use associations and mnemonic devices to

remember important names or lists. Keep a calendar and refer to it. Frequently repeat what you know and what you want to know.

- **Keep Physically Active:** Physical activity and exercise has been shown to boost cognitive abilities and maintain brain function and memory. Try aerobic activities to raise your heart rate such as biking, jogging, or walking. Stretching, yoga, and strength training are also great ways to maintain physical activity.
- **Eat Healthy:** Studies have shown that high cholesterol diets increase the risk of memory loss, Alzheimer's, and dementia. Diets high in antioxidants can decrease that risk. Eliminating foods high in saturated and trans fats in favor of monounsaturated fats like olive and peanut oils is a great way to prevent memory decline. The Mediterranean Diet is a great place to start.
- **Sleep:** Current scientific belief is that your brain transitions short term memories into long term memories while you sleep. It is also when your brain resets itself for the next day. People who experience poor sleep (i.e. sleep apnea) score worse on memory and cognitive tests.
- **Keep Mentally Active:** Never stop learning. A higher level of education is associated with better memory in old age. Learning and challenging your brain is believed to maintain and stimulate communication between your brain cells, strengthening and maintaining memory. Puzzles, quizzes, games, reading, learning a language, and maintaining a hobby are all great ways to challenge your mind and continue to learn. Much like a muscle, your brain strengthens itself as you use it and atrophies when you don't.

- **Hone Your Senses:** Your brain uses all of its senses to create memories. Use this to your advantage. Notice the feel and smell of things as you go about your day. If you need glasses, wear them. If you need a hearing aid, keep them on and charged. Give your memory every advantage!
- **Maintain Your Health:** When your body is in poor health, your brain suffers as well. Many medical problems that can impair cognitive skills are readily treatable. Stop smoking, avoid alcohol, maintain good blood pressure, treat diabetes, get treatment for sleep apnea, seek professional help for depression, and keep an eye on your cholesterol.
- **Believe in Yourself:** People who don't believe they can control their memory are less likely to work on improving it, leading to cognitive decline. Believe you can do it and turn that belief into practice.

Sharing stories with others is another great way to strengthen your memory. Try creating a memory journal with the provided template to preserve your life's memories for your family. Or create a unique memory journal of your own!

*Post a picture of your memory journal on Instagram or Facebook or email to marketing@rvu.edu to be entered into the prize drawings!

Additional Resources

<https://familydoctor.org/healthy-habits-at-age-60-and-beyond/>

<https://www.apa.org/pi/aging>

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/healthy-eating-physical-activity-for-life/health-tips-for-older-adults>

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