

Building Memory Muscle: Recall Notice

Why are sharp memory skills important? "Working memory impacts on every aspect of how our brain works and, as a consequence, every aspect of our lives: from securing our survival, to making savvy business decisions and controlling our emotions," says psychologist Dr. Tracy Alloway. An [article](#) by Neil McKay in *The Journal* (Newcastle, England) describes a "jungle memory training" program developed by Dr. Alloway which helped young students make "massive" improvements in working memory.



Dr. Alloway believes that games may also help stretch working memory such as "video games that involve planning and strategy" and Sudoku, but found that "the 'instant' nature of texting, Twitter, and YouTube had a negative impact on the brain cells."

So how can you train your memory to work more efficiently? Marlene Caroselli's *T&D* article "[Maximize Your Memory: Improve Your Memory to Present Better, Work More Efficiently, and Lower Stress](#)" explains an approach by Dr. D.P. Devanand of Columbia University's Memory Disorders Center.

When you're inputting information, says Dr. Devanand, pay attention to what you're trying to remember, but don't try to retain everything. "To avoid information overload, use filters: Screen incoming ideas for relevancy; As you take in information visually or aurally, train your eyes and ears to filter out the unimportant and catch only what you need."

More tips: "Make immediate use of incoming information that you wish to retain. The faster you use it, the more of it you'll remember, Develop your listening and concentration skills." Also, "Remove barriers that prevent the information from entering your brain-for example, noise in the environment or judgments about a person." And "Sharpen your powers of observation."

Dr. Devanand offers many more good tips not only for inputting information but also for storing and retrieving it, along with exercises you can use to practice them.

How forgetful are you? This *Psychology Today* [Memory Test](#) asks seven simple questions about how well you remember and provides feedback on whether you need to improve.