

Easy Memory Boosters

Expert strategies that will help keep your mind in tip-top shape.

BY KAREN ASP

STRIKE A POSE
Don't have time for a full hour of yoga? Just 20 minutes is enough to benefit your brain.



THE PSYCHOLOGIST SAYS:

Refocus your fitness routine

Exercise has been shown to protect memory, but some workouts may be better than others. In a *Journals of Gerontology* study, adults 55 and older who practiced yoga three times a week for eight weeks had better working memory capacity (being able to recall, say, all eight items on your grocery list) than those who strength-trained or stretched. The attention to mind and body during yoga may carry over to daily activities, improving your focus.

NEHA GOTHE, PhD, assistant professor, kinesiology, Wayne State University, Detroit

THE PHARMACIST SAYS:

Check your medicine cabinet

Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs cause memory issues such as an inability to think clearly or loss of short-term recall. Medications to watch out for include antidepressants, sleep aids, antihistamines, muscle relaxants, heavy-duty painkillers and statins. If you're taking one of these, talk to your doctor about switching to another option or reducing your dose, which can combat forgetfulness.

SHERRY TORKOS, RPh, pharmacist, Fort Erie, Ontario

THE ALZHEIMER'S EXPERT SAYS:

Prioritize weight loss

When overweight postmenopausal women shed about 18 pounds, activity in regions of their brain responsible for episodic memory—being able to remember events in the past like your first day of school—changed for the better, according to Swedish research. Plus, excess weight, especially in midlife, has been linked to an increased risk of dementia later. One possible reason: When you're holding on to extra pounds, your heart may not pump blood as efficiently to the brain, which impairs your cognition.

HEATHER M. SNYDER, PhD, senior director, medical and scientific relations, Alzheimer's Association