

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Using Mnemonic Techniques to Improve Your Memory and Recall

We all have excellent memories. The problem is that our memories are a lot like our bedroom closets- filled with junk we don't need and never use. Then when we try to find what we are looking for, we have to dig through the pile of junk. Sometimes we find what we need, sometimes we don't. Mnemonics helps organize the way we store information. Just like having an organized system of storing your clothes helps you find what you are looking for in your closet, mnemonics helps you find what you are looking for in your memory.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Using one letter from each word to form a sentence-

My Very Educated Mother Just Showed Us Nine Planets

My Very Energetic Mother Just Screamed Utter Nonsense

SIMPLE PEGS

BODY LIST

- 1- FEET
- 2- SHIN
- 3- THIGH
- 4- BUTT
- 5- STOMACH
- 6- SHOULDER
- 7- BACK OF NECK
- 8- NOSE
- 9- EYES
- 10- TOP OF HEAD

This list is a quick easy list to learn, and is hard to forget. Make sure your images are vivid and unusual. The more bizarre, painful, or unpleasant they are, the more memorable they become. Once you have made an image, put it out of your mind when you make the next one. Don't consciously try to recall the images until you have made all of them. They will all be there, ready to go when you need them.

OBJECT LIST

There are 2 drawbacks to the Body List. It only holds 10 objects, and it is sometimes hard to recall which body part goes with which number. The object list extends to 20 items, and makes each object a more natural association with its number.

OBJECTS FOR NUMBERS

- 1- TREE

- 2- LIGHT SWITCH
- 3- STOOL
- 4- CAR
- 5- HAND
- 6- GUN
- 7- DICE
- 8- SKATE or OCTOPUS
- 9- CAT
- 10- BOWLING PIN
- 11- GOAL POST
- 12- EGGS
- 13- WITCH
- 14- VALENTINE HEART
- 15- PAYCHECK
- 16- CANDY
- 17- MAGAZINE
- 18- VOTING BOOTH
- 19- GOLF CLUB
- 20- CIGARETTES

MEMORY PALACES/THE JOURNEY METHOD

Ancient Roman orators imagined their home populated with different items, real or imaginary, and each was linked to something they wanted to remember in one of their speeches. (By the way, the use of Memory Palaces in oratory is the origin of the expressions "in the first place", "in the second place", and so on.)

The journey method is a powerful, effective method of remembering lists of information, by imagining images and events at stops on a journey. As the journeys used are distinct in location and form, one list remembered using this technique is easy to distinguish from other lists. To use this technique you need to invest some time in preparing journeys clearly in your mind. This investment pays off many times over by the application of the technique.

The simplest journey to remember is one through your own day. Start at the beginning of the day, in your own bed, and move through your bedroom, stopping at 5 locations in your bedroom. Then move into the next room you would visit- maybe the bathroom?- and then continue on, making 5 specific locations at each step of the journey. Eventually, you can compile a journey of 40-50 or more locations, enabling you to remember much longer lists than is possible with the object list above. On the back of this page, write out the first 20 stops on your journey.

NUMBERS

Because numbers are so abstract, it is hard to come up with ways to memorize them as such. One method to help memorize numbers involves converting the digits into sounds.

- 0 – “o”
- 1 – “a”
- 2 – “b”
- 3 – “c”
- 4 – “d”
- 5 – “e”
- 6 – “s”
- 7 – “g”
- 8 – “h”
- 9 – “n”

From here, you would now generate a list from 00 to 99, and associate a famous person with either the number itself, or if there is no immediate numeric association, using the sounds associated with the number to come up with an association. For example, for the number 31, I have no immediate person I can associate with 31. However, using the sounds associated with the numbers, 31 becomes C A. To me, C.A. is "Charles Atlas". One VERY important step in this process- when you use your person for each number, you must also have an associated action for that person. In other words, 31 to me is Charles Atlas lifting weights. The reason you need an associated action is that this allows you to expand your range of numbers two-fold. To remember a 4 digit number, use the person's identity of the first 2 digits, but picture that person performing the action of the person in the second 2 digits. For example, for me, number 41 is Mets pitcher Tom Seaver, throwing a fastball. To memorize the number 3141, I would use the person at the 1st 2 digits, Charles Atlas, but envision him performing the action of #41, in other words, Charles Atlas, throwing a fastball.

This technique will take some time to master, but when you have a list compiled, it will become the most powerful mnemonic technique in your arsenal.

REMEMBERING NAMES AND FACES

A. Pay Attention

1. Decide to remember.
2. Ask for a repetition if necessary.
3. Realize that people are flattered when you take an interest in their name.
- 4.

B. "Save" method

1. **S** - Say the name 3 times in conversation.
2. **A** - Ask a question about the name (e.g.: how it is spelled) or about the person.
3. **V** - Visualize the person's prominent physical or personality feature.
4. **E** - End the conversation with the name.

"FACE" Method

5. **F**- Focus- Concentrate when you meet the person
6. **A**- Ask- Ask a question about the name
7. **C**- Comment
8. **E**- Employ

NAME Method

1. **N**ominate- a prominent feature about the person you meet
2. **A**rticulate- in your mind, describe the feature you have nominated
3. **M**orph- morph the name into a familiar object
4. **E**ntwine- combine the morphed name and the nominated feature into an unusual image

C. Make a Simple Association

1. Same name as someone you know.
2. Celebrity or famous person - Monroe, Wayne or Moses
3. Occupation - Singer, Smith, Gardener
4. A thing or animal - Kane, Woods, Cooper (coop), Swan, Fox, Paige, Rose
5. Brand name - Campbell, Ford

6. Rhyme it - Kwan/Swan
7. Convert to other words: Askew (ask you); Honeycut; Slatsky (slat sky); Cameron (camera on); Carson (car son)
8. Translate - Morgenstern is morning star
9. Adjectives with characteristics: toothy Ruthy, dapper Dan, jaunty Jack. (You don't have to tell the person how you are recalling their name.)

D. When convenient, make notes on calendar, note pad, roster, program, etc.

1. Name and prominent feature
2. What you talked about
3. Person's interests, job, family, etc.
4. Can keep permanent notes in rolodex, address book

E. Review the next day and week until the name is known.

F. Use your friends' names daily in conversation, even if silently.

II. REMEMBERING GROUPS OF NAMES

A. Acronyms - first letter of each name spells a word.

E.g.: Mary, Alice, Margaret and Evelyn = **MAME**

B. Acrostics - first letter of each name stands for a word in a sentence.

E.g.: Fred, Lois, Pauline, Ida = **Find little pickles immediately.**

More bizarre sentences are easier to remember.

C. Keep a file or notebook of names for each of your activities or groups. Review before each meeting.

III. IMAGE NAME METHOD

A. Note the person's prominent facial or personality feature.

B. Make a simple association or find substitute words in the person's name.

C. Link the person's prominent feature with their substitute word in an unusual mental image.

1. E.g.: *Elizabeth* is very fat; imagine her as a queen at an *Elizabethan Feast*.
2. E.g.: Jack is a very *big* man; imagine him as Jack the *Giant* Killer.
3. E.g.: Mr. Steel has *steel* gray hair; imagine *brittle steel* all over his head.
4. Bizarre or unusual images are easier to remember.

D. If their prominent feature does not directly fit their name, find a substitute word in their name and imagine it interacting with their prominent feature.

1. E.g.: *Valerie* has a dimple in her chin; imagine a *valley* there.
2. E.g.: Mrs. *Gianelli* has curly, long hair; imagine *Ghiradelli* chocolate dripping from her hair.

E. These techniques are abstract and take practice. Just trying will focus your attention and improve your memory.

IV. SUMMARY

A. Pay attention.

B. Repeat the name.

C. Note the person's outstanding feature.

D. Find substitute words in the name or make a simple association.

E. Link the facial feature and substitute words in an unusual image.

F. Make notes when convenient.

G. Rehearse, practice and have fun!

NUMBER/NAME TEMPLATE

00 = OO =

01 = OA =

02 = OB =

03 = OC =

04 = OD =

05 = OE =

06 = OS =

07 = OG =

08 = OH =

09 = ON =

10 = AO =

11 = AA =

12 = AB =

13 = AC =

14 = AD =

15 = AE =

16 = AS =

17 = AG =

18 = AH =

19 = AN =

20 = BO =

21 = BA =

22 = BB =

23 = BC =

24 = BD =

25 = BE =

26 = BS =

27 = BG =

28 = BH =

29 = BN =

30 = CO =

31 = CA =

32 = CB =

33 = CC =

34 = CD =

35 = CE =

36 = CS =

37 = CG =

38 = CH =

39 = CN =

40 = DO =

41 = DA =

42 = DB =

43 = DC =

44 = DD =

45 = DE =

46 = DS =

47 = DG =

48 = DH =

49 = DN =

50 = EO =

51 = EA =

52 = EB =

53 = EC =

54 = ED =

55 = EE =

56 = ES =

57 = EG =

58 = EH =

59 = EN =

60 = SO =

61 = SA =

62 = SB =

63 = SC =

64 = SD =

65 = SE =

66 = SS =

67 = SG =

68 = SH =

69 = SN =

70 = GO =

71 = GA =

72 = GB =

73 = GC =

74 = GD =

75 = GE =

76 = GS =

77 = GG =

78 = GH =

79 = GN =

80 = HO =

81 = HA =

82 = HB =

83 = HC =

84 = HD =

85 = HE =

86 = HS =

87 = HG =

88 = HH =

89 = HN =

90 = NO =

91 = NA =

92 = NB =

93 = NC =

94 = ND =

95 = NE =

96 = NS =

97 = NG =

98 = NH =

99 = NN =