

Total Memory Workout

Step 1: Meet your Memory Memorcises

1. Who's playing games? You should be – games that involve sequencing or require you to work quickly are great for building up your attention span and information processing speed. Some terrific games include concentration, a form of solitaire that can be played with a simple deck or cards; Simon (Milton Bradley), an electronic game that is excellent for exercising your attention-span skills; word puzzles, brain teasers, and a myriad of computer games that require skill and speed. This week, look for games you enjoy playing that grab your attention and give it a real workout.
2. Write down a ten-digit number such as a phone number that you'd like to remember. Cover the number with a separate piece of paper so that only the first digit shows. Read that digit to yourself, then look away and repeat it. Add a digit each time you are successfully able to repeat the sequence. Once you have mastered the first number, use this technique to practice other numbers that you need to remember, such as credit card numbers and PIN numbers.
3. Go through the same steps as in Memorcise 2, only this time substitute randomly selected words instead of digits. Make sure that the words are unrelated and do not form a sentence. How many words can you hold in your short-term memory?
4. "Did you Notice?" games are games you can play anytime, anywhere for a quick attention-building fix. Here are some examples for you to try:
 - After a social event, such as dinner with friends or a cocktail party, practice remembering details of the event with your spouse or a friend. Can you remember the names of people who were there, what people wore, the room's decor?
 - Sit in your kitchen and make a list from memory of all the contents of your bedroom. Then do the same for all the contents of your medicine cabinet.
5. On the bus or train, study the person opposite you for about a minute. Then look away, and review in your head all the details of his or her appearance to test how well you paid attention. What do you do to exercise your brain? Think about what intellectual activities are part of your lifestyle that flex your brain "muscles". Do you read, solve crossword puzzles, play cards, paint,

or take classes that interest you? Do you “cross train” your brain by doing things that challenge all the different aspects of your intellectual functioning? Do you need to do more?