

How to slow down memory loss

Memory experts all agree – keep your mind active and fit. Gary Small, Director of the Memory and Ageing Institute at UCLA psychiatric institute (and author of *The Memory Bible: An Innovative Strategy for Keeping your Brain Young*) says that by keeping our mind active and fit, we have the potential to prevent or slow down two thirds of our memory loss. In particular, Small names 4 strategies to slow down the ageing process in the brain:

1. Mental activity – keeping the mind active and fit
2. Physical Exercise – keeping the body active and fit
3. Stress management – reducing and preventing stress
4. Diet – maintaining a healthy diet that includes plenty of antioxidants

1. Mental activity – keeping the mind active and fit

If a car remains inactive for too long, it won't start. The same applies to your mind; the less you use it, the harder it becomes to access your semantic memories. Keep your mind active with brain games (puzzles, quizzes etc.), books, hobbies, variety in your lifestyle; trying new things etc.

Activities that adequately exercise your brain need to involve one or more of the following: to be novel, interesting, fun, enjoyable, challenging or surprising; to involve one or more of the senses; or be outside of one's normal routine or methodology, such as:

- Tying your shoe laces with your eyes closed; communicating without talking; choosing an aromatherapy oil for your bath via the sense of smell with your eyes closed; using your non dominant hand; taking a different route home.

Do something that is enjoyable or surprising and is outside your usual routine. Eg. hiking on the weekend, walking somewhere that you would usually drive to; having a picnic in your backyard. Take a drive into the country side and pick fruit from a tree rather than buying it at the store; join a fun run instead of your usual solitary run; if you're a crossword person, try sudoku; read a different type of book to what you're used to; join a fitness training group that offers a changing variety of programs and incorporates motor fitness activities.

