

9 Ways to Improve Your Memory

Even the busiest mom can incorporate them into her life, and they really do work.

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

I once totally forgot to pick up the little boy we carpool with on the way to preschool. I didn't even realize it until four hours later, when it was time to get the kids from school. Mortified, I called his mother and apologized profusely. The fact that we didn't know each other well and she didn't call me first made me feel even worse.

Then I forgot again three weeks later.

I'm only 35, but brain blips like those happen more often than I'd like. Though it doesn't make me feel any better, experts say that occasional, mild memory lapses are normal for a 30-something. As you get closer to 30, your body starts making fewer of the chemicals your brain needs to work. Coupled with the lack of sleep and stress levels typical for moms, that can take a toll on your memory. Luckily, scientists are on the case. You probably already know that it's helpful to exercise your mind by doing crossword puzzles and playing online brain games, and that getting enough sleep at night helps you think more clearly. But recent research has unearthed plenty of other ways to boost your brainpower.

1 Eat Brain Food

A heart-healthy diet is also good for your gray matter, so fill up on foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (wild salmon, halibut, walnuts, flaxseeds), monounsaturated fats (nuts, olive oil, avocados), and antioxidants (berries, beans, apples), all proven brain boosters. Spices and herbs—including cinnamon, oregano, and nutmeg—also sharpen the mind.

YOU CAN DO IT When you shop, try to get most of your groceries from the perimeter of the store, where you'll find most brain foods, says Larry McCleary, M.D., author of *The Brain Trust Program*. Then spice it up. "Turmeric, the stuff that gives curries and mustard their yellow color, is a good one," Dr. McCleary says. "Studies in mice show that if you have a mouse predisposed to developing Alzheimer's disease and you give him a lot of turmeric, you decrease damage to the brain."



