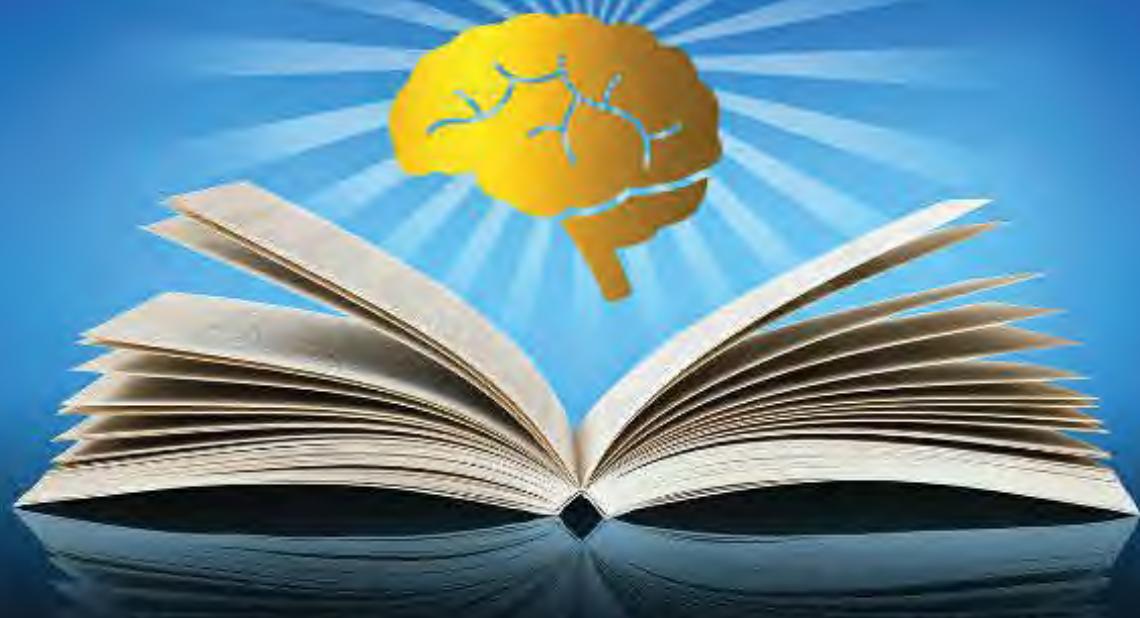


**TRIPLE YOUR
READING MEMORY
AND CONCENTRATION**

*in 30
Minutes*



K A M K N I G H T

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INTRODUCTION

In this book, you will learn how to increase your reading speed, improve your memory, and enhance your concentration.

On the surface, these areas seem difficult to develop, but if you use the right approach, they can be quite easy. In fact, you'll be surprised just how easy they are.

Without wasting too much time on a lengthy and time consuming intro, let's dive right in.

SECTION I – SPEED READING

This section will start by showing you how to increase your reading speed by 300% in a matter of seconds.

Yes that's true, in a matter of seconds!

The reason I can make such a claim is because you already have the ability to read this fast. You're just not putting it to use.

Instead of wasting time on a drawn out explanation of how this is possible, I am going to simply show you.

How you are reading text right now is probably word-by-word. That is, when you read a sentence, you fix your eyes on every word in that sentence, going from one word to the next and to the next.

Not only is this a slow way to read, but when you concentrate on individual words, you often miss the overall meaning of what the sentence is communicating.

Space Reading

The key to speed reading is to not look at the words, but the spaces in between the words.

That's right, the spaces between them.

When you look at the space between words, your eyes naturally and automatically pick up the words to the left and right. You don't have to exert effort or force. It just happens on its own.

Try it for yourself.

Below is a two-sentence paragraph with a small dot in between each word. Go through the paragraph glancing quickly through each of the dots. Start with the first dot, then move to the second, then to the third, and so on. When doing this, don't look at the words. Simply scan your eyes from one dot to the next in quick succession.

Even . though . you . are . not . looking . at . any . of . the . words . in . this . paragraph . your . eyes . and . mind . are . still . able . to . pick . up . the . text . . This . happens . because . paying . attention . to . the . spaces . prevents . your . eyes . from . narrowing . their . focus . on . individual . words .

Whoa, amazing right!

By paying attention to only the dots – the spaces between the words – your mind was able to capture the text rapidly. As a result, you were able to read more, at a faster speed, and with higher comprehension. This is the essence of speed reading. You change your focus from looking at individual words to the spaces in between the words.

There you have it. You have just increased your reading speeding.

If this didn't work for you, try the exercise again. Remember, look at only the dots in between the words in the above paragraph and swiftly move from one dot to the next. You might try softening your gaze when doing this.

Then to read faster, you switch from looking at the spaces between every word to looking at the spaces between every two words. To read even faster, look at spaces between every three words. With enough practice, you can raise your speed so you only need to look at a few spaces per line of text to grasp the information in that line, and do so with higher attention and comprehension.

However, don't immediately jump to this level. You need to practice. First practice for a few weeks looking only at a space between every word. Once you are comfortable reading at this level, move up to glancing at spaces between every two words. Go up to a space every three words only when you are proficient with every two.

As you progress, make sure to work on expanding your peripheral vision. That is, expand your ability to capture more words to the left of the space and words to the right of the space. Your goal is to notice more and more words on each side.

When practicing, don't try to force yourself to comprehend what you are reading. Simply focus on creating a habit of looking at the spaces and moving from one space to the next. As mentioned, understanding and comprehension will come naturally. Trust your mind to be able to construct meaning without conscious effort on your part.

The great thing about this technique is that it is not a skill you need to learn or develop. It is an innate ability that you already possess. It is the natural way your eyes and mind work to pull in content. All you really need to do is change your habit from looking at the words to the spaces between the words.

This is one way to increase your reading speed. I like this method because it is very easy to get started with. However, some people don't like this method or find it effective. I don't understand why, as it is as simple and straightforward as instructions get, but to each its own I guess.

If you don't like this method, there is another that is as effective.

Chunking

With chunking you are looking at words, but instead of looking at them one at time, you are glancing at blocks or chunks of words.

When you look at something, your eyes instinctively want to focus in on it. This causes your field of vision to narrow. Think about what happens when you are taking a picture of a close object, the background and surroundings get blurred. When there is no object, the background is very clear.

This is the same principle with your eyes. When you look at a word, the natural tendency for your eyes is to narrow its field of vision on that one word. With your field of vision narrowed, you have no choice but to read text one word at a time.

The trick to speed reading is to open your field of vision to capture multiple words at a glance.

Let's illustrate with an example. Below is a similar paragraph as from the previous exercise, but this time broken into chunks with the "/" character inserted between every few words. Take each chunk and look at all the words together at one time as a whole. Move to the next chunk, then the next, and the next in rapid sequence.

Even though you / are not looking / at individual words / in this paragraph / your eyes and mind / are still able to / pick up the text. / This happens because / paying attention to / chunks of words / prevents your eyes / from narrowing their focus / on individual words.

Pretty nice huh!

Like the previous technique, you were able to grab the text without focusing on individual words. And like the previous technique, you in effect increased your reading speed simply by changing the way you look at words. It feels like you shouldn't be able to read text more than one word at a time, but as you saw, your mind and eyes have the ability to grab group of words in a single glance.

The key to chunking is not to grab words at random, rather combinations that form a phrase. A phrase is two or more words that form a meaningful unit in a sentence. If you notice, the previous paragraph is broken into meaningful units. You don't want to grab combinations like:

/ this paragraph your eyes /

/ and mind are still /

/ the text. This happens. /

Phrases like these are more difficult to understand, and therefore to digest, so they will keep you from reaching your maximum speed.

At the same time, there isn't only one right combination either. Different people can pick out different chunks, which can still be classified as a *phrase*.

These are the two effective ways to speed read - looking at spaces and chunking. Like anything in life, however, speed reading is about increasing habits that speed you up, while decreasing the habits that slow you down. We talked about effective habits that speed your reading up. Let's now turn our attention to a not so effective habit that slows it down.

Sub-vocalization

Sub-vocalization is the act of pronouncing each word in your head as you read. When you sub-vocalize, you "hear" the word being spoken in your mind.

Most people do this to some extent or another.

It's a behavior that starts when you are first learning to read. When you were young, you read out loud to connect the right sound to the right word. Once you become fluent, you stopped reading out loud, and started reading in your head. Most people continue reading this way, hearing the little "voice" in the back of their mind, for the rest of their lives.

The problem with sub vocalization is that it adds an unnecessary step to your reading. The mind can process meaning of words far quicker than it takes for you to speak or hear them. By vocalizing words out loud or in your head, you force your mind to read slower than its potential. You are essentially having it do two tasks at once.

To really enhance your speed reading ability, don't verbalize words out loud or in your head as you read. Eliminating this habit alone can increase your reading speed significantly.

It helps if you read at a pace where you simply cannot pronounce words or think about their sounds. If you are focusing on sounds of words, you don't quite trust your mind enough to do what it is made to do.

It also helps to close your mouth while reading. Talking activates many parts of your body such as your lips, mouth, tongue, jaw, and throat. Without realizing it, sub-vocalization does it too, but to a lesser degree. Despite being less, it still affects your reading. By keeping your mouth closed, you stop many of these processes from being activated. You'll be surprised at just how much this will keep you from sub-vocalizing.

These are some of the ways to increase your reading. As you noticed they are not hard or difficult to implement. They simply require you to shift your habit, which isn't always simple.

To simplify changing your habit, it helps if you start with material that is easy to read. It also helps to read the material twice, first as you normally would, then again incorporating the methods you learned. This way you are not so worried about understanding the content because you

will have done that in the first pass. Instead, you can work on changing the habit from focusing and sub-vocalizing to expanding your field of vision and reading silently.

Before moving to the next section on improving memory, if you would like to learn more fascinating information about how your mind works and powerful methods to learn and do more, make sure you are signed up to the MindLily Mind Performance newsletter. If you are not, you can do so by clicking [here](#).

This chapter just scratches the surface on speed reading. There are many more amazing tips and techniques that can boost your reading speed and comprehension. To find out more, download your copy of [Speed Reading: Learn to Read a 200+ Page book in One Hour](#)

SECTION II - MEMORY

In this section you will learn to enhance your memory. Before getting started, it is important to realize that “learning,” “understanding,” and “memory” are in a way one and the same. If you are trying to learn something, more than likely, you want to remember it. In order to remember something, you have to first learn it. To make your learning and memory useful, it helps to have an understanding of it. Because of the similarities, this section will discuss memory improvement in relation to learning and understanding as well.

When it comes to enhancing memory, there are a ton of memory systems and methods out there. I’m sure you’ve come across many of them like acronyms, rhyming, association, and dozens more. With some many techniques, it’s hard to know which one to use, how to use them, in which setting, or with which type of information.

This section will make all that very clear.

It will show you how to bring together all the different memory aids in a format that makes it easy to not only learn and understand material, but to remember it as well. With this format, you will be able to remember all types of infor-

mation, whether its facts from a book, details of a lecture, the events of your daily life, or even a set of complicated instructions for work.

So how does this format work?

The format revolves around repetition. Repetition is exposing yourself to a thought or idea over and over. The basic principle is that the more you repeat something, the more your brain takes notice to remember it. Repeat a thought or idea long enough, and you are guaranteed to lock it in your mind.

Repetition is essential to learning. In fact, it is the mother of all learning. Everything you know or know how to do was learned through repetition. Even the fancy tricks of memory experts can only be applied through the use of repetition. It is the most important tool in the memory tool box.

When people think of repetition, however, they think of it as tedious and mind-numbingly boring. That's because they think of the rote variety where you simply repeat in your head or out loud the material you want to remember. Yes this is repetition, but it is just one type of repetition. This type is not only boring, but ineffective.

Fortunately, there is more to repetition than rote memorization.

Repetition can be performed in many ways and on many levels. The more levels you incorporate into your learning, the more you enhance your understanding and memory of that information.

So what are these different levels?

This is where all the memory tools come into play. When you use a memory tool, you are in essence exposing yourself to that information. If you use two memory tools, you are in effect exposing yourself to it twice. Three tools, and you repeat the information three times. The more tools you use, the more repetitions you create.

Here in lies the secret.

By incorporating as many memory tools and techniques into your learning, you create a set of repetition that repeatedly expose you to the information, and in different ways, thus enhancing your understanding and memory of it. As mentioned, the more tools you use, the more repetitions you create, and the longer and stronger will be your memory of that information.

So how can you do this?

As with anything, there are right and wrong ways to approach repetition. You don't want to approach it haphazardly and combine techniques at random. If you do, you

might over complicate the information, making it more difficult to remember.

To do this effectively, I recommend using memory aids that work with the natural rhythm of the brain. The more a tool is in harmony with how your mind naturally processes information, the easier it will be to repeat and the more impact it will have. Also you want to apply the aids in a specific order, so each aid builds on the knowledge and strength of the other.

First, I'll discuss some natural methods that enhance learning and memory and what makes them so effective. After, I will discuss how to put them together in a nice order.

Preview

The first method is Preview. Preview means glancing over material you want to learn or remember. For example, if you are assigned to read a chapter of a text book, preview would involve reading the title, chapter summary, the main and section headings, as well as any items in bold, underline, or italics. If the chapter includes pictures, tables, or graphs, you would glance at these as well.

Previewing is effective for learning and retention because it prepares your mind for what you are about to learn. It gives you a framework of what will be presented and in what order. This makes it easier to grasp and retain informa-

tion as you know what pieces are coming and how they fit together.

You can think of preview like assembling the outer edges of a jigsaw puzzle. When you have the outer edges assembled, it's easier to put the pieces in the right place. Otherwise everything gets jumbled without any clear structure or direction.

Taking notes

Note taking is another relentlessly effective memory aid. Studies show that when you take notes, you learn material much better and retain it far longer, even if you never review the notes you take.

Did you read that?

Taking notes helps you remember information even if you never look at what you wrote down ever again!

I can quote many studies to support this claim, but you likely already have plenty of evidence from your own life. How many times have you written something down to find it automatically fixed in your mind? You write a shopping list only to realize you don't need to look at it when you are at the store. You set an appointment in your calendar only to remember it without a reminder.

Or how about the opposite. You come up with an idea so

great, you can't possibly forget it. So you don't write it down. 20 minutes later, you've not only forgotten the idea, but that you had one in the first place.

This happens for many reasons.

One reason is that note taking requires you to pay attention. In a dull lecture or when you are reading complicated text, your mind has the tendency to wander, especially if you are tired or preoccupied. Taking notes keeps your mind from wandering because you have to concentrate on the words at least to some degree if you are to write them down. You cannot write down what your mind does not notice.

Another reason is note taking helps with comprehension. In order to note material accurately, you have to organize the different thoughts and ideas and discern what is important or not. The more you understand a subject, the more you will remember it.

The main reason for note taking's effectiveness is it engages your body. In order to note information, you have to be moving your hand. Although this doesn't require much effort, there is a complex mental process involved to move your hands properly in order to write (or type) the correct words in the correct order. This kinesthetic process connects the information directly to the brain.

Taking Breaks

To do your best work, you need mental and physical breaks, even if it is just for a few minutes. This is why airline pilots, truck drivers, and operators of heavy machinery are closely monitored to ensure they have plenty of break time.

Break time is just as important for learning as well.

Learning consumes a large amount of willpower, concentration, and logical thinking. These things do not fill up quite as fast as you are able to read and listen. So although you can physically keep going, your mind can't. It needs to stop, rest, and recharge. Usually the longer the learning session, the more time you need to step away.

In other words, your brain acts like a muscle in many respects. Any time you're exercising, like lifting weights or doing yoga, your muscles inevitably get tired. To do each additional lift or hold a posture for each additional second becomes that much more challenging. However, if you take a break and rest for a few minutes, you can do another set of 10 or 20 easily. The brain works the same way. You need to give it breaks to perform the next session effectively. If you keep going, it will get more and more tired, losing more and more focus, comprehension, and ability to retain information.

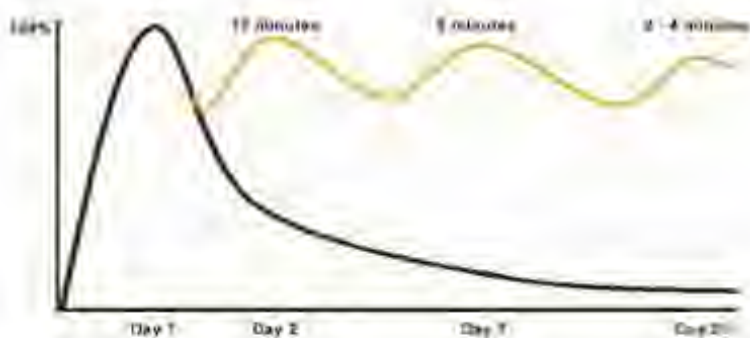
More importantly, breaks are vital for digesting that information. Studying, reading, and listening are great for taking

information in, but your mind still needs to integrate it. When you step away, your mind gets a chance to process and analyze what it has received. You might not notice this happening as it is occurring in the background. However, if you don't give the brain this processing time, it won't get a chance to internalize any of the material you just learned as its attention will constantly be on new information. As you will discover in the next section, the result is that you will simply forget that information.

The bottom line is breaks are often better for the brain than overtime.

Review

Another memory enhancing best practice is to regularly go back and review material you have learned or memorized. Earlier I mentioned how taking notes enhances memory even without review. This is true. Though, if you add review to the mix, retention increases further. In fact the results are astonishing.



The above graph shows how memory declines over time when there is not an attempt to retain it through activities like review. If you notice, every hour that passes, your memory of the information reduces significantly. By the end of the day, if you have not reviewed the material, you will have lost anywhere from 50 - 70% - depending on whether you took notes.

This isn't a 5 or 7% decline, rather 50 to 70%.

That's a significant amount.

As you can see, without some sort of review, information is lost from memory very quickly.

However, if you look at the other line in the graph, it shows that by reviewing, you can retain memory of that information as if you had just learned it, even days, weeks, and months later. Review signals to the brain to hold on to that information.

The best time to review material is soon after you've learned it, preferably within an hour. As the above graph illustrates, memory starts to decline rapidly the hour after you have learned something.

A good formula is to spend 5 - 10 minutes reviewing material for every hour you spend learning it. After the initial review, it helps to do it again few days to a week later. Then

depending on how far into the future you want to retain the concepts, you would spend 3-5 minutes every month to keep it fresh.

Review is an excellent return on your investment. 5 minutes can potentially save hours of time that you've invested reading, writing, learning, or taking notes on something.

Retrieval

Retrieval is the act of recalling information you've placed in memory. Most learning aids, like the ones we've discussed so far, focus on putting information into your head. Retrieving on the other hand deals with getting it out. With this strategy, you try to remember information you've learned. It is a bit like review, but you are doing it without looking at any materials or notes.

Countless studies show that retrieval is one of the best ways to reinforce memory. One such study, by Jeffrey D. Karpicke at Perdue University, showed that retrieval not only reinforces memory better than other methods, but even combinations of other methods.

That's impressive!

Retrieval works so well because it helps your brain keep track of where it is filing information. Imagine a large room crammed with filing cabinets. When we learn something,

the information is placed into one of the drawers of one of the cabinet. If you have been placing large quantities of information in the different drawers, over time you're going to forget what information you put in which drawer. By accessing the information regularly through retrieval, you recreate and rediscover the path to the drawer. This reinforces not only what's in the drawer, but where the drawer is located.

Another benefit of retrieval is that it helps you identify gaps in your learning. When you are not able to retrieve something you've read or heard, it indicates that your knowledge of that area is weak. This immediately signals that it may be an area you need to put more time and effort on. If you don't practice retrieval, you don't get this feedback. Instead, you'll get a false feeling that you know the lesson better than you really do, especially if the information was learned easily and feels fluent.

What's great is, the more you practice retrieval, the more it motivates your mind to commit new information to memory. If the mind knows that it will be called on later for details of what you are going to learn, it will work harder and pay more attention to ensure it is properly recorded. It's a technique that continually builds on itself the more you use it.

Retrieval has become the big rave these days. With all the

recent studies validating its benefits, a new breed of memory authors and experts are writing, talking about, and selling this technique. If you haven't heard of it already, I suspect you'll be hearing it more often.

Learning styles

Learning styles isn't a specific memory method, but as the name suggests, a style or way of learning. We all learn differently and these differences define our so-called style. There are three main styles of learning: aural, visual, and kinesthetic. Although others exist, these are the main ones.

Aural

Aural learners learn through listening. They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say. They are great at picking up meaning through subtle auditory cues such as voice tone, pitch, speed and other nuances. For aural learners, written information may have little meaning until it is heard.

Visual

Visual learners are those who learn by seeing. They pick up information through diagrams, pictures, illustrations, videos, and by watching things happen. When given instructions, these types of learners will absorb it best by

watching exactly how it is done. For a visual learner, information may have little meaning until it is seen. This person may spend hours trying to understand from reading and listening, but the moment it is shown, he or she will get it instantly.

Kinesthetic

Kinesthetic learners have a more physical style. They learn from doing, moving, and manipulating. Kinesthetic learners tend to be in a very different position in school. Their style of learning is rarely emphasized in an educational system where children are told to sit, watch, and listen all day. They may read, hear, or see something said, but the connection to the information is not made until they have done it.

Each of these styles have a big impact on how much we are able to absorb, process, and hence, remember. For some, one style makes it easy to engage in and grasp content, while another will leave them feeling bored and inept. So to maximize our learning, it is said we should engage information in our dominant style.

I would take that one step further and say you should engage information using all the styles, not just the dominant. Although we tend to be dominant in one style, we can benefit from all. Each learning style activates a different part of the brain. By activating more parts, you will remember more of what you learn. It's the equivalent to adding

more repetitions to the mix, which is the reason it is being discussed.

Association

Another technique that works in very close harmony with the brain is association. At a basic level, association is connecting something you want to remember with something you already know or that may prove easier to learn. In other words, it is finding ways to relate information to other information.

Association is one of the most widely taught memory techniques. It is one of the oldest too, used by ancient storytellers and orators to recount lengthy tales and speeches to their audience. It is also very popular among memory champions and authors with most memory improvement books heavily emphasizing their use.

Why are associations so popular?

The obvious answer is because they work so well.

The obvious response is why do they work so well Mr. Smarty Pants?

Well...as I mentioned, associations work in line with how the brain likes to store and use information. Unlike a computer's memory, which stores and calls up information directly, our memory is stored in a complex web of

interconnected links. That is, our memories are not floating around aimlessly in our head, they are connected and anchored to one other like the roots of redwood trees.

As a result, when you think of one thing, that thought will bring to mind related things. For example, when I say the word "lemon," you probably think yellow, round, citrus, and sour. You might also think about candies that have a lemon flavor like lemon drops or drinks like lemonade. In addition, pictures of cut, sliced, or squeezed lemons might pop up in your head. All these surface simply by thinking of the word "lemon."

So if memory is elicited simply by thinking about what we have associated to it, it helps to find ways to "associate" new data to what we already know. What you already know then acts as a "cue" or trigger to remember the new information. For example if you wanted to remember the names of the U.S. president, you might connect or associate them to the States they are from like Abraham Lincoln to the State of Illinois. The State then becomes a "cue" to remember the name.

Because associations are so popular and have been around for so long, countless varieties of this technique exist – everything from acronym, loci method, peg system, link system, etc. Personally I don't care for most of them as I find them too limiting. They work great for lists or in an educa-

tional setting, but they prove too unpractical otherwise.

The association technique that I recommend using is connecting or relating new information to the big picture. Too often when we learn a subject or idea, we do so in isolation. However, there is almost always a bigger purpose or context to the idea that we may either overlook or fail to grasp.

For example, earlier in the section I talked about visual learning. I brought up that topic because it relates to the 3 styles of learning. Learning styles influences how well you can grasp information. More importantly, the different styles can be used as a way to add repetition to your learning. Repetition is the overall purpose or “big picture” of this section.

If you failed to see how visual learning style connects to the big picture of repetition, you would miss a crucial lesson. You might know all the ins and outs of what visual learning is, but that knowledge would have little use as you wouldn't know how to apply it effectively.

Most of us are doing this all the time.

We get so busy trying to learn and remember the million pieces of information that is thrown at us, we forget the bigger context it is being presented in. We could be learning about the organs of the body, and not see how they interact with each other or even where they reside in the body.

We might be learning about animals, but fail to see that it is being taught in the context of the different ecosystems they live in. We could be learning about historical facts and events, and be oblivious to the more important details of when and where it happened.

By connecting the smaller pieces to a bigger or broader context, you are not only making associations and connections, but ones that are meaningful. This will ensure that in addition to remembering the material better, you understand it better as well. Without connecting it to the bigger purpose, the idea would simply become an isolated thought in your mind, losing relevance or purpose.

Test Yourself

This involves asking or answering questions about the material you want to commit to memory. In a way, this is similar to retrieval in that you are pulling information out of your memory. However, retrieval as I've described it entails reciting your knowledge of a subject or topic without the use of notes or materials. Testing yourself, on the other hand, requires you to ask and answer a set of questions about the material.

For example, if you were learning about the planets of our solar system, to solidify that knowledge with retrieval you would simply recite what you learned like, "The solar system has 8 planets. The smallest planet is Mercury and the

largest is Jupiter.” And so on. When testing yourself, you’d ask a series of questions like:

“How many planets are in the solar system?”

“What planet is the smallest, which one is the largest?”

“Which planet has an icy ring orbiting it?”

Like retrieval, testing is a tried and true way to commit information to memory. Also like retrieval, there are loads of scientific studies that support this as one of the best methods out there. Researchers have actually created a technical term for this – the “testing effect.” I can reference these studies to support the power of testing yourself, but I’d rather reference something that gets less attention.

Did you know there is a mechanism in your mind that is designed to seek answers whenever a question is posed?

Really!

There resides a mental process in your brain where anytime it hears a question, whether it was asked by you or someone else, it begins seeking possible answers. This mechanism is automatic. You don’t control it, it just happens. And you can’t really stop it either. When a question is brought up, the mechanism is triggered, and answers are sought.

Often, it doesn't matter how rational the question is, the mechanism of the mind simply begins searching for possible answers and brings them into your awareness. You can ask two opposing questions and it will seek answers to both.

If you don't believe me, try it for yourself.

Ask yourself "why am I so smart?" You'll probably get answers like because I went to school, I study hard, I eat healthy, etc.

Now ask the opposite "why am I stupid?" The responses you receive might include "because I don't study, I am lazy, or I don't eat well."

Whether you truly think you are smart or stupid is irrelevant. The answers you receive are in accordance with the question that is asked.

This is happening all the time, all around you. You might be watching a tragic story on the news and utter "How could that happen?" with someone next to you suggesting a likely reason. Or you might be venting about "why your co-worker acted a certain way?" with your friend giving you an explanation.

Again, this happens because your questions prompt this response mechanism in the other person. What you'll find is that often the other person's answer may not be in line

with their true views. Yet they are still expressing it because that's the answer the question triggered. This explains why we so often play devil's advocate in conversations for no apparent reason.

The point is when you test yourself with questions, you immediately engage this mechanism. This does so many things. It forces your mind to start thinking about the lesson, and more importantly, to begin seeking answers and solutions. Thinking about answers acts as a form of retrieval that reinforces your memory of the information. In addition, it identifies deficiencies in your knowledge if you can't come up with correct responses or any at all.

If you notice, throughout this book, I ask a lot of questions. It is not by accident. It is deliberate. I do it because I know it will engage you, have you thinking about the material, as well as improve your memory of it.

Teach Others

This means explaining the subject matter to another person. The best way to test if you really understand something is to teach it to someone else.

When you teach, you learn at a level you could not have otherwise. This is because you are forced to interact with the topic on many levels. You are retrieving it, organizing your thoughts, verbalizing it in a clear way, answering

questions the other person might have, etc. It takes you from being a mere student of the material to becoming a master.

Now, I'm in no way suggesting that you change your occupation and become a teacher or professor. All I am saying is impart your knowledge to another person. That other person can be a friend, spouse, or students and colleagues who are having trouble with the lesson. You might even teach to a group of stuffed animals. Why not?

This sums up the discussion of the different memory methods. These methods are some of the best ways to learn, understand, and enhance memory of information. They work well, because as you saw, they function with the natural rhythm of how your brain likes to take in and store information.

As mentioned earlier, by combining these methods, you enhance your learning, understanding, and memory even further. Combining the methods adds the power of repetition. The more you expose yourself to information, the longer that information will stay in your mind.

So how would one go about combining these methods?

It's simple really.

Step 1. First, start with preview. Glance over the material

you want to learn or remember.

Step 2. Next engage the material. If it is a book or article, read it. If it is a lecture or presentation, attend and listen to it. If it is a video, watch it.

Step 3. Then go back and take notes on the material.

Step 4. When you finish taking notes, this would be a good time to take a break.

Step 5. Returning from the break, look over and review your notes. You might choose to review your notes out loud to engage the aural part of your mind.

At this point you'd have a solid understanding and memory of the information. It would be successfully filed in your mental storage.

Step 6. With the material in storage, practice retrieving it from storage. If you want, you could do this out loud to engage the auditory senses again.

Step 7. After recall, you might engage your visual senses. You are probably wondering, "How can I engage the visual sense of materials like a book or lecture?" You can do it by visualizing the information. Close your eyes and visualize what you learned or want to remember.

Step 8. If your lessons involve doing or performing some-

thing like a task, then this would be a good time to involve your kinesthetic senses.

Step 9. Once you've done all this, look at how the content connects to the big picture.

Step 10. At this point, you are ready to test your knowledge. You can answer end of chapter questions, take practice quizzes or exams, or you can ask yourself a series of questions about the material.

Step 11. After completing the above steps, your understanding of the material ought to be strong enough to impart that knowledge. It's now time to teach what you have learned to another person.

This is how you would go about combining the different memory methods to form a series of repetition. You'd start with preview and end with teaching the content to others, and add as many other memory aids in between.

What's great about this system is that it is not rote at all. Each method is unique and performed in its own way. As a result, it doesn't get redundant or boring. Also each method targets, stimulates, and engages different areas of the brain hence activating different parts of your memory.

When doing this, follow the above steps as closely as possible. Try to incorporate as many of the methods as you can

and in the listed order. The reason is the earlier steps make it easier to do the later ones. *Reviewing* material will help you better *retrieve* it. If you can easily *retrieve* the lesson from memory, you will have an easier time *visualizing* it. If your knowledge is strong enough to *visualize* the content, then it is likely strong enough to *test yourself* on it. If you can answer questions correctly, then you are in a better position to *teach* it to others.

However, this is not a hard and fast rule.

You may not always be able to do all of these steps or do them in the exact order. For example, if you're reading about yoga postures, it will be tough to practice the moves in the middle of a book store. If you are reviewing history notes, visualizing the events may prove difficult in a loud or distracting environment. In these instances, do the steps you can in the moment and skip the ones you can't for later. But do make sure to do them later.

At initial glance, all these steps may seem time consuming and a lot of work. Although it seems that way, in reality, it is not. Many of these steps take very little time and can be done rather quickly.

For every hour of learning, you need only spend about 2 – 5 minutes on each of the individual steps of previewing, reviewing, retrieving, visualizing, and testing. You shouldn't spend more time than that. Taking breaks is never an issue

for most people, no matter how long it is.

Taking notes and physically performing a task do take time. However, often you can't avoid them. Teaching might be time consuming too as you are interacting with other individuals, but if you manage it well, it can go rather quick.

All in all, it should take only about 15 – 25 minutes to go through these steps for each hour spent learning.

If this still seems like too much, then what is the other option? Do you want to simply plug knowledge into your brain like Neo in *The Matrix*? Until technology catches up, that's not a real option.

The problem is, if you do nothing, as you saw from the graph, nothing is what you'll end up remembering. It's not a question of if, rather when. The less you repeat the material, the quicker you will lose it. So wouldn't you rather spend an extra 15 to 25 minutes to lock in what you've learned, than lose the hour you spent trying to get it?

As you know, repetition is necessary for information to stick in your mind. There is just no way around it. This is how the mind (memory) works. The more it is exposed a certain type of information, the more it remembers it, even without conscious effort on your part.

This applies not just to information, but to your thoughts,

emotions, and mental states as well. If you notice, your dominant thoughts, emotions, and states, whether positive or negative, are those that have been replayed the most often. They are the ones you have focused on or are focusing on constantly in your life.

Even fancy tricks of memory experts and champions require repetition to learn, get comfortable with, and apply. For example, you might create an acronym to remember the colors of the rainbow. Well, you still have to review and repeat that acronym for it to stick in your mind. It won't magically etch itself the moment you create it.

Since repetition is so vital and there is no avoiding it, this is as efficient a memory technique as any. It is systemized, works with your natural rhythm, and compliments each other. What you'll find is that in the long run, this format actually saves time. You're not reading a book and then re-reading it again a week or month later to remember what you read. If done right, weeks and months down the road, the lesson will still be in your head.

And when the lessons stay in your head, you'll be able to use and apply them more readily, instead of saying, "Well I read some good advice a few weeks ago, I just don't remember it. Once I read it again, I'll know what to do." If you are like most people, you'll likely forget to even read it again.

If there is a challenge with this format, it's that it requires

you to be active with the material, which you are probably not use to doing. You're probably use to taking information in passively by merely reading, watching, and listening. It is much easier to passively read, watch and listen to a passage than to actively retrieve, visualize, or answer questions about it. This is why most people prefer to re-read or re-listen to a lesson, than try any of the more effective methods.

Another challenge is that some of the methods take effort, maybe even some exertion and force. You'll be trying to visualize a lesson and it will feel like pulling teeth as you battle with other thoughts to form an image in your mind. You will set aside some time to practice retrieval, and draw a blank. Or you'll be attempting to answer questions, but your resistance will be so great, that you'll keep putting it off.

Realize this happens only because you are not habituated or accustomed to the methods. Retrieving or visualizing information are things you are not use to or have been required to do. As a result, they will feel uncomfortable, and sometimes downright painful in the beginning.

The notable phrase here is *in the beginning*.

The more you do them, however, the less resistance and pain they will create.

At one point, you were not accustomed to reading. It might

have been challenging and unenjoyable to go through just a few simple pages. You might still find reading unenjoyable, but since you've been required to do it your whole life, it's probably not as challenging anymore as you've become accustomed to it.

Just as with reading, you will have the same experience with these methods. Initially it will be a strain on your will, but through practice, the struggle will pass. The key is practice. You have to practice as much as possible, as often as possible, and with as many different types of information as possible.

It helps to start with shorter, not so demanding material, like an article. Take a random article or one that you find interesting and practice previewing, reading, noting, taking a break, retrieving, visualizing, being active with, testing, and teaching it.

Then grab another article and do it again.

Keep doing it until the format becomes second nature, so the next time you pick up a book, or head to a lecture, you automatically go to preview and the subsequent steps.

This is all for enhancing your memory. If you would like to go deeper into any of the tips offered here, as well as many other amazing ones, then you don't want to miss out on [Memory: Simple, Easy, and Fun Ways to Improve Memory.](#)

The book describes in great detail how to effectively apply these techniques in different settings—school, work, and personal life. It also discusses many other methods to use on its own or add to your repetition repertoire.

SECTION III - CONCENTRATION

Now that you have learned to improve your reading and memory, it's time to move onto a more important topic, concentration.

Concentration is your ability to focus on a task without being distracted. It's an ability that is extremely critical to pretty much everything you do. Without it, even the reading and memory techniques you just learned will have little value.

Improving concentration, however, can be difficult because you are dealing with an abstract concept.

If I wanted to teach you how to build a wooden table, that's fairly straightforward. I could give you set of instructions that shows you where to buy wood, cut it in the right way, and then nail it together. With concentration, however, it is a little more complicated. How can I show you to rewire your brain so the neurons fire in ways that allow you to maintain focus?

That's why so many concentration experts provide such roundabout advice on how to improve concentration. They don't offer direct techniques that develop your ability to concentrate. Instead they simply offer tricks to help manage

the things that get in its way.

I'm sure you've heard many of these tricks. They include everything from creating a purpose, rewarding yourself, managing your energy, building willpower (what does that even mean), tweaking your environment, and the big one, eliminating distractions.

Suggestions like these can be helpful, and for many, they have been.

However, they don't get to the root of the problem. The suggestions simply attempt to manage it with manipulative tricks. The assumption is that you already have good concentration, but certain factors are getting in the way of your ability. By reducing these factors, your concentration will improve.

Well, what if your concentration isn't good to begin with?

What then?

Then more than likely, their suggestions will provide little benefit. Even if they did, you don't always have control over many of the factors they suggest you to change. You can't bring your ergonomic chair to a lecture nor can you stop all the irritating construction noise outside your office. Even more, I would love to see the reaction on your boss's face when you ask her to reward you for sitting through her

dreadful meeting. Often you have to make do with the situation or environment you are in.

In this section, I won't bore you with tricks. Again, not because I think they don't work. But because they don't address the underlying problem.

Instead, I will attempt to give you tried and true methods that actually improve your concentration. They are not tricks that offer short term results. Instead, they are tools that build your mental skill to concentrate so you can pay attention despite your environment, distractions, or not having that lavish three piece ergonomic office set.

State Control

The first method will work to calm your inner state.

One of the challenges of concentrating is that the mind is constantly on, running on autopilot, with thoughts coming in and out of our awareness. Sometimes it comes in to remind us of things, like an important deadline. Other times it goes back and forth working out a conversation or argument. Still at times it mulls over decisions or reflects on something happening.

What's worse, for some of us, this is happening very fast with the mind racing on a large number of thoughts and ideas in quick succession. For others, their mind works

such that thinking of one thought triggers another thought, which triggers another, and another. So their mind is randomly skipping between unrelated thoughts, unable to hold focus in any single one. Still others have a mind that fills up like a balloon with so many thoughts, it becomes a cluttered mess.

As you can imagine, any one of these things can make it extremely difficult to concentrate and stay on a thought, task, or activity. Next thing you know, you are unable concentrate not because your thoughts are racing and jumping, but quite frankly, you're exhausted from trying to keep your thoughts from racing and jumping.

What's more is that your thoughts trigger emotions. If a thought comes up, then more than likely, it comes with a certain feeling. So being reminded of that deadline might trigger anxiety. Thinking about an argument with a spouse may well trigger anger or resentment. Or the thought of making a wrong decision can elicit fear.

So not only are your thoughts coming in and out of your awareness, but so are your emotions. These emotions are not only distracting, but they have a big impact on your thinking. For example, if you are trying to write a story or novel, having fear and anxiety running in the background can seriously hinder your efforts. You will procrastinate, second guess yourself, go back and forth on a passage, and

may even give up the project altogether.

So how can one get a handle on all this?

As you can imagine, this is not easy to do. You can't tell your mind to stop racing and you can't always ignore negative emotions relentlessly clawing away at you. It takes time, effort, and training to manage these things. Buddhist monks spend their entire lives in this endeavor.

Though, instead of spending months, years, or even a lifetime trying to manage your inner distractions the hard way, there is one thing you can do that takes little time or effort.

That one thing is a relaxation exercise.

Relaxing the mind slows down your thoughts and stops them from racing, jumping, or filling your head like a balloon. More importantly, it **DAMPENS YOUR EMOTIONS** so they don't distract or get in the way of your thinking.

This occurs as a byproduct of the relaxation. Calming your mind naturally calms your thoughts and emotions. You don't have to use struggle or force, it happens on its own. You just have to work on calming yourself and the rest takes care of itself.

When the volume of your thoughts and emotions are turned down, you'll be surprised just how easy it is to think, hold a thought, and well, concentrate. You'll find

your thoughts and ideas flow more easily and naturally, with little strain and effort on your part.

Here is a quick exercise to get you started.

First, close your eyes, clear your mind, and begin breathing deeply through your nose.

Inhale slowly, paying attention to the air flowing into your lungs, hold your breath for a few seconds, then exhale slowly while concentrating on the air flowing out.

Focus only on the movement of air in and out of your nose.

As you do this, repeat in your thoughts or out loud, *I am calm in mind and body.*

Try not to rush or feel rushed as you do this. The goal is to slow your mind down. By rushing, you hinder the process.

After a few minutes of breathing and reciting this mantra, you will begin to feel a calming and relaxing sensation wash over you. Your thoughts will slow down and you will be less influenced by emotions of anxiety, fear, or urgency.

This will allow you to think better and more

clearly. Ideas will flow more naturally – unhindered and uncensored by other thoughts and feelings.

This is the easiest, most effective way to improve concentration. As you'll notice, the effects are immediate, without the need to put forth a lot of time, effort, or mental training.

You'll find that an upcoming deadline or the sheer amount of work in front of you doesn't elicit as strong feelings of stress or feelings of being overwhelmed. And those emotions don't elicits thoughts of worry or what will happen if you don't make the dead line. As a result, it's easier to think, hold a thought, and concentrate.

Use this exercise anytime you feel off, overwhelmed, or your thoughts and ideas aren't flowing as you'd like. Take a minute to calm your mind and emotions. It'll give you the clarity you need to get the focus you desire.

Building Endurance

The next method is concentration training. This involves training your brain to hold your thought on an object or subject for longer and longer periods. It's a simple method with big results.

To do this, grab a small item that you can hold in your hand. You might start with a piece of fruit like an apple or orange.

Now examine the item from all sides and angles while keeping your full attention on it. Notice as many details as possible such as its size, shape, and curves. Also pay close attention to its texture as well as any shadows that are cast on it. You might even pull out a magnifying glass to observe it more closely.

While doing this, don't think about anything else. Keep your focus on the object in front of you. Don't lose yourself to thoughts like where the apple was grown, how long it will stay ripe, or its nutritional content. If you find your thoughts drifting like this, bring them back. Don't get mad or upset that your mind drifted. Simply bring it back and continue with the exercise as if nothing happened.

What you will notice is your thoughts don't drift spontaneously. The process is slow and sly. As your attention is focused on the apple, you might start thinking about dishes prepared with apples like apple pie. Apple pie may take you to a memory of last week's dinner when you had apple pie for dessert. That memory may trigger a memory of the TV show that you watched after dinner. Then you start wondering what's going to happen in the next episode of the show, and low and behold, your concentration is gone.

Why does this happen?

Remember in the memory section when we talked about

the associated nature of the mind? Thinking about a thing triggers thoughts of other things that are related or associated to it. Although this process is amazing for enhancing memory, it has the opposite effect on concentration. When you want to focus on a subject, you begin thinking about everything related to that subject and everything related to that, and before you know it, your mind is on a completely different thought all together.

Be aware each time this happen. Notice how your thoughts, without any conscious decision on your part, begin drifting like this. The more aware you are when this is happening and how it is happening, the more you can stop the pattern and bring yourself back.

What you will also notice is that not only will your thoughts drift, but so will your actions. One minute you're examining an apple in your hand, the next minute you're doing something completely different like checking phone messages, going to the bathroom, or reading an online article. On occasion, you may even find yourself in a different room, forgetting that you were initially doing this exercise.

It's interesting how even though your intention is to remain present in the exercise, you are anywhere but present and everywhere but on the exercise. You went from here to there without consciously realizing it. It's as if your unconscious took over your decision and went and did its own

thing.

Guess what?

Your unconscious does that.

Your unconscious habits, routines, behaviors, and impulses have the ability to override what you are doing or would like to be doing at any given moment and have you acting and doing something completely different. It does it and is doing it all the time.

Like your drifting thoughts, it is also very sly when doing it.

So be aware of not only when your thoughts drift, but when your actions drift as well. Notice the triggers that cause your actions to go in another direction. If it is a habitual response, usually there are no triggers. You're automatically reaching out for your phone or pulling up the internet on your screen. By paying attention to when your concentration is taken away, you'll be able to stop yourself and bring your actions back to the exercise.

When doing this exercise, try to keep your focus on the item for as long as you can. In the beginning, you will find you can only hold it for 10 to 20 seconds before you either start losing yourself to other thoughts, getting irritated, or feeling the itch to do something else. You may even find yourself getting more and more impatient and resistive as

the seconds go by.

That's o.k.

Start slow and gradually move up. You might set a goal to do it for 20 seconds. Once you master 20 without interruption, move up to 30 seconds. Then a minute. Then 2 minutes. Then up to five minutes.

By continually progressing, you will build your endurance and habit to concentrate. It will develop your ability to maintain focus for longer and longer periods. By building endurance here, you will be able to carry it over to other areas of your life, making it easier to stay on tasks, conversations, assignments, and projects.

You'll also get a deeper understanding of what takes your attention away and exactly how it happens. The more aware you become of this, the quicker you can stop it from happening. In addition, you'll find you get less irritated or have less need to shift to a different task.

To reiterate the exercise:

1. Take an item.
2. Focus on it.
3. When your thoughts or actions start to drift, calmly bring them back.

4. Notice the pattern of how your thoughts and actions drifted.
5. Every time they drift again, bring your attention back again.
6. Practice this over and over and over.

The more you practice, the stronger it will get.

This is one way to improve your concentration, by training your brain to hold your attention on a subject for longer and longer periods

Resisting Distractions

Another way to improve concentration is to train your brain to refrain from attending to a distraction for longer and longer periods.

For example, you might put your phone in front of you or stare at an incoming email message and see how long you can go without picking it up or checking it. Again you will find in the beginning you can only do it for a few seconds before your body just takes over and reaches out for the phone or key board.

Each time you reach out, notice what is going on internally. Pay attention to the thoughts your mind uses to convince you to pay heed to the distraction. It will say things like

“what if it’s an important message.” “If I don’t respond now, she’ll be upset.”

The fact of the matter is 99.99% of the time everything will be fine. The world won’t collapse if you ignore the distraction. Though you’ll find the mind has a way of making the .01% probability feel like 99.99% by throwing into your awareness all sorts of doom and gloom scenarios of the awful things to come if you resist that distraction for another second aahhhh!

Also notice how your body feels. Do your muscles tense up? Do you feel anxious or agitated? Do you find your mind completely fixed on that distraction, unable to think about anything else, even though you’ve decided not to attend to it? You might even find it hard to sit still, so you get up and start pacing.

Like in the concentration training exercise, notice both your mental and physical reactions. They provide loads of clues as to how you are pulled into the distraction. Most of the time, it’s been outside your conscious control. You didn’t actually make the decision to become distracted. It was your habituated and impulsive response that acted on your behalf. What this exercise aims to do is retrain that habitual response.

As before, try to refrain from acknowledging or attending to a distraction for as long as you can. Like the concentration

training exercise, you will probably be able to resist only for a few seconds. The goal is to gradually increase the length you can hold back. Do it until you can't do it anymore, and then a little longer. Then a bit longer after that. Keep building up your resistance.

You can do this exercise with all types of distractions. If you hear the painful sound of the faucet dripping, instead of getting up to turn it off, see how long you can stand the noise. Go until you can't endure it anymore, then go some more. As you get up, stop, sit down, and go a bit more.

To summarize:

1. Anytime a distraction comes up, pause.
2. Wait as long as you can or the situation allows.
3. Notice your thoughts and feelings.
4. Then attend to it.

Well this sums up the three exercises on improving your concentration. One exercise calms your inner state, another builds your endurance to concentrate. The other builds your resistance to distractions. By practicing all, you will expand your ability to stay on tasks, conversations, and projects at hand.

These are just three methods to improve concentration. There are plenty others that work as well or better than

these. If you would like to learn more about them, a great resource is [Concentration: Maintain Laser Sharp Focus and Attention for Stretches of 5 Hours or More](#)

CONCLUSION

Alas, we've reached the end.

In this quick guide, you learned some fantastic strategies, methods, and exercises to supercharge your reading, memory, and concentration.

Although these strategies are not hard to do, they do require changing your habits, which is easier said than done. Even changing the simple reading habit of shifting your focus from words to the spaces in between words can prove to be a challenging endeavor. Your habitual responses, behaviors, and impulses are going to want to do things the old way and they will battle with you.

In a way changing these habits is like trying to overcome addiction – the addiction of doing things the old way. In truth, you can think of anything you want to do in life, but aren't or can't, including improving your reading, memory, and concentration, as a byproduct of some addiction to your old routines, behaviors, and mental states.

If they weren't addictions, you would be able to make the changes easily and right away. You would be able to take any of the suggestions and put them into practice without second thought. In fact, the concentration training exercises in

the previous section would be completely unnecessary, as the mere desire would be enough to put your attention on a thought and keep it there.

Unfortunately, this isn't so.

If you have ever done any work with people who have addictions, and not just to substances, but any addiction whether to food, working, emotions, etc., you'll find they all exhibit similar patterns. They make excuses for why it is o.k. to stay in their old routine even though it is damaging, unhealthy, or not working for them. They feel great pain and resistance when trying to change. Most of all, they lie to themselves incessantly about how they will start tomorrow, next time, or when they finish this or do that.

With that said, like an addict, you may want to stick to your old reading, memory, and concentration routine even though they are not working for you. Like an addict, when following the suggestions, you may feel resistance and pain, maybe even withdrawal. Like an addict, you will put off the advice for a later time, incessantly lying to yourself that you will do it with the "next" book you read, the "next" lecture you attend, or the "next" fill in the blank _____ . Every next you will push off to the further next.

So although the advice here is not difficult to understand or implement, doing them might be a challenge. Your sly

mind has all sorts of clever tricks up its sleeve to keep you from implementing these strategies and may even have you forget about them.

Be aware of this.

Just because you know what to do, want to do it, and can benefit from doing it, doesn't mean you will be able to actually do it. It will take practice, and at times, will power to integrate the strategies into your life. However the less you put off the exercises for a later date and the more you start practicing now, the easier they will get. Before you know, all the resistance will subside and it will become second nature.

Do you run, exercise, or play a musical instrument? How difficult was it when you first started? How un-pleasant was it in the beginning? Despite the difficulties, after a while, you started to like what you were doing. It became a habit, and did not require as much effort. So it is with the advice presented in this book.

After some practice, it will become easier, and your mind will do it naturally with little strain or effort on your part. Your mind will work for you in a most efficient way.

Thanks for reading this book. In a short time, you learned quite a lot about improving your reading, memory, and concentration. I hope you enjoyed the advice and found it

useful. If you did, it would be great if you could leave a positive review of it. Your review will encourage others to try this material. You can leave a review by clicking [here](#).

Remember, to learn more fantastic speed reading tips and techniques, check out:

[Speed Reading: Learn to Read a 200+ Page Book in 1 Hour](#)

As mentioned, to further your knowledge about the memory aids presented here and to learn many more, you'll like:

[Memory: Simple, Easy, and Fun Ways to Improve Memory](#)

To advance your ability to concentrate, focus, and pay attention, the book for you is:

[Concentration: Maintain Laser Sharp Focus and Attention for Stretches of 5 Hours or More](#)

If you enjoyed this material and would like to get more power tips to help you learn and do more, make sure you are signed up to our newsletter. You can sign up by visiting MindLily.com/newsletter or clicking [here](#).

Now it is a matter of practice.

I encourage you to spend a few minutes a day to practice these lessons.

Keep on practicing what you've learned until they become

second nature.

And they will become second nature.

Go for it and remember to have fun with it.