



# Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

## Concussion / Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation: 10 Ways to Improve Your Memory

1. **Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep** - Keep a quiet, cool environment. Go to sleep at the same time nightly. No napping. Avoid high energy video games/movies/television prior to bedtime. Avoid exercise before bedtime.
2. **Write it down** - Keep a notebook and pen with you and write things down, it will keep you on track and help remind you of important things, like taking your medication. Day planners or small calendars help also.
3. **Avoid alcohol, tobacco, excessive caffeine and energy drinks** - These increase sleep problems, anxiety, blood pressure levels, and overall stress.
4. **Prioritize** - Make a list of things that need to be taken care of, place them in order of importance, and check them off when completed.
5. **Get a routine** - Put your keys in the same spot every day. Park in the same areas. Being consistent helps memory and lowers anxiety.
6. **Keep mentally active** - Work crossword puzzles. Read a book. Play a board or card game like solitaire or concentration. Try to learn something new every day.
7. **Decrease your stress level** - Don't take on too much at one time. Keep stress to a minimum. Stress hormones can damage your brain and add to depression and anxiety. Learn to say "no" when feeling overwhelmed. It's also OK to ask for help when you need it. Make time for you.
8. **Stay physically active** - Take the dog for a walk. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Small spurts of exercise add up. The higher blood flow to your brain helps promote cell growth. Exercising is also a mood booster and helps with mental clarity.
9. **Feed your brain** - Eat high quality foods at regular intervals. Fish, colorful fruits and veggies, milk, eggs, whole grain breads, nuts, and beans all help to keep the brain and body healthy.
10. **Avoid further brain injury** - Consider swimming, walking, or running instead of playing football or boxing. Wear a helmet when riding your bike or motorcycle. Drive safely. Stay sober.



*This tool is to be used as a patient education resource during a visit with your provider.*

**Developed by Subject Matter Experts from the DoD and VA**

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