

Easy ways to improve memory

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Everyone forgets things from time to time. Periodically forgetting where you left your keys is likely not indicative of a bad memory. But some people find themselves forgetting things more frequently, a troubling development for those who can't explain their sudden loss of memory.

Memory loss is often considered to go hand-in-hand with aging. As a person ages, conventional wisdom suggests memory will begin to fade. But sometimes memory loss has nothing to do with aging, and a lot to do with a brain that isn't sharp because of an unhealthy lifestyle. The following are a few ways men and women can improve their memory.

• **Get some sleep.** Men and women who aren't getting enough sleep can almost certainly blame that lack of shut-eye for at least some of their memory loss. When you don't get enough sleep, your brain's ability to think critically, solve problems and even be creative is compromised considerably. In addition, research has shown that memory-enhancing activities occur during the deepest stages of sleep, further highlighting the importance of getting a full night of interruption-free rest.

• **Hit the gym.** Exercise is another activity that can improve memory. Daily physical exercise increases the amount of oxygen that gets to your brain while reducing the risk for certain disorders, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease, both of which can lead to memory loss.

• **Manage stress effectively.** Stress has a host of negative side effects, not the least of which is its impact on your memory. Chronic stress that goes untreated can destroy brain cells and damage the region of the brain that deals with the formation of new memories as well as the retrieval of older memories. Numerous studies have shown that men and women cite their career as their primary source of stress. Since quitting your job is likely not an option, find ways to manage your stress more effectively. This may mean finding a way to make the most of your time, be it working more efficiently, emphasizing planning ahead or even vowing to stop procrastinating. Other ways to manage stress include making time to relax and recognizing that you have limits while seeking the help of others.

• **Make some dietary changes.** Diet can also have an impact on memory. What you eat is fuel for both your body and your brain, and a poor diet can have a negative impact on your memory. Be sure to include omega-3 fatty acids, sources of which include salmon, tuna and

Memory..... continues on page 2

Stay healthy when the sick season of sneezes and sniffles arrives

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The cold weather brings with it a season of smiles, the first snowfalls and, unfortunately, cold and flu outbreaks. While everyone else is suffering, there are ways you can make it through the season unscathed.

It is estimated that a billion people across North America will succumb to the cold virus this year. Considering there is no cure for cold and flu viruses, prevention remains a person's best option at fending off cold and flu. There are different precautions to take that can help protect you against getting sick or at least reduce the frequency and severity with which cold and flu strikes.

Although there is no magic pill to take that will prevent you from catching a cold or the flu, there are ways to improve your odds.

- **Wash your hands the right way.** Washing your hands frequently remains the single-best way to keep viruses and bacteria that can make you sick from infiltrating the body. Washing your hands for at least 20 seconds can effectively remove any dirt, grime and invisible invaders.
- **Skip antibacterial products.** Because colds and the flu are the result of viruses, which are different in behavior and structure from bacteria, they will not be killed off with the use of antibacterial products. What you may succeed in doing is killing off any benefi-

cial bacteria on your hands as well as creating resistant bacteria that form with over-use of antibiotics and antibacterial products.

- **Get the flu shot.** There is no vaccination to prevent the common cold, but there are immunizations that can help reduce your risk of getting the flu or help minimize its severity.



Doctors' offices, clinics and even pharmacies all offer annual flu shots.

- **Use sanitizer on items around the house.** Surfaces that are frequently touched by all members of the household should be wiped down with a disinfectant product. A bleach-and-water solution is an effective sanitizer. Surfaces to sanitize include phones,

doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, computer keyboards, faucets, toys, and countertops.

- **Avoid sick people.** KidsHealth.org states that flu viruses and colds can travel up to 12 feet (from a sneeze or cough). Steer clear of anyone exhibiting symptoms, especially someone who is frequently sneezing or coughing. Parents should keep children home from school if they are sick. Do so until symptoms subside so as not to infect others.

• **Use a sanitizer product.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise that when hand-washing is not readily available, a good way to kill germs is to use an alcohol-based sanitizer lotion. While not as effective as washing hands in warm, soapy water, sanitizing products can be used in a pinch while you're on the go.

- **Cough into your sleeve.** Rather than coughing or sneezing into your hands, do so into the crook of your elbow since this area rarely touches anything else.

• **Skip the buffet lunch.** Buffet-style offerings are convenient and offer variety, but they are also a breeding ground for illnesses. These foods may have been sneezed or coughed on. Also, the serving spoons have been touched by dozens of people.

There are many different ways to avoid getting a cold or the flu this season. Diligence is one of the keys to staying germ-free.

Learn the basics of donating blood

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The flow of healthy, oxygenated blood through the body is essential for life. It is also required in large supply when people undergo surgeries and other therapies. With the demand for blood so high, reserves are in short supply. Adding to the shortage is lower turnout among donors, and the public has been urged to donate blood to increase units available.

Blood shortages abound

The Red Cross and America's Blood Centers, which collectively represent all of the blood banks in the United States, continued to report shortages throughout 2012. According to Red Cross President Dr. Bernadine Healy, there is a critical shortage of blood, and the shortage in 2012 was one of the worst her organization had seen. As such, the shortage has forced the cancellation of many elective surgeries across the United States. ABC notes there also are severe shortages throughout the Northeast.

Increased demand, mean-

ing chemotherapy treatments, organ transplants, heart surgeries and elective options, have left blood banks depleted. Plus, the demand for blood exceeds the rate of blood donations. The Red Cross has stated it typically needs 80,000 units of blood available daily, but now has roughly 35,000 units.

How do I donate blood?

Many people want to donate blood but are either off-put by the idea of needles and drawing of blood or are unaware of the process. Becoming informed can shed light on what is done and make the entire process much less intimidating.

Blood drives occur at various locations. You also may be able to donate blood directly at a Red Cross center or hospital. Simply log on to www.redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code or address to find out where and when a blood drive will be held.

Just about anyone age 17 to 75 can donate blood. Provided they are at least 110 pounds and do not have any

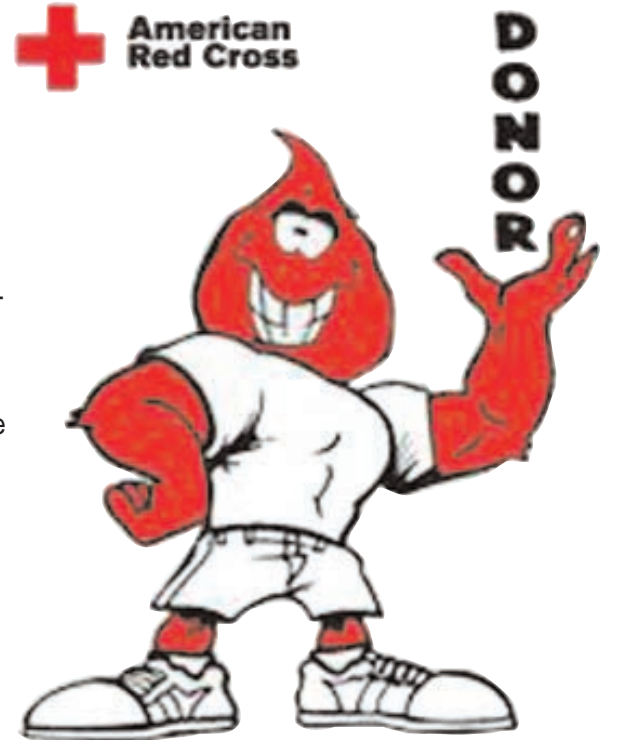
acute symptoms of the flu, colds or infections or have had close contact with someone with hepatitis in the last year. Those who have hepatitis, a heart condition that is more serious than a murmur or HIV/AIDS or have engaged in any activities that may have put them at risk for HIV/AIDS, will not be able to donate.

At the donation you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and be given a screening interview to qualify as a donor. You also will need to provide documentation that proves your age, so bring along identification. If you pass the screening, your vital signs will be checked and you will be prepared for the blood draw.

As with a routine blood test, the injection site will be sterilized and then a needle will be inserted to draw the blood. The volume of blood collected for a donation will be larger than for a blood test. One pint, or 450 milliliters of blood, will be taken. This is only between 8 to 10 percent of all the blood in your body.

How will I feel?

Most people come through a blood donation unscathed. There may be a minor pinch when the needle is inserted. After blood has been drawn, many people feel fine and are encouraged to drink extra



liquids for the next two days to help the body with the regeneration of blood. Your body will replace the fluid portion of your blood within 24 hours. It will take a few weeks to replace the red blood cells. Individuals who feel a little woozy can sit after the blood donation until they feel rested enough to move on.

How long does it take?

It takes around 10 minutes for a traditional blood donation. If you are donating something specific, such as red cells, plasma or platelets, the process can take up to 2 hours. Many blood drives provide refreshments after donating and ask that you remain 10 to 15 minutes to ensure you are fine to exit.

What should I expect after the donation?

Afterward you should be able to go on with your regu-

Blood continues on page 3

Student loans increase significantly since 2008

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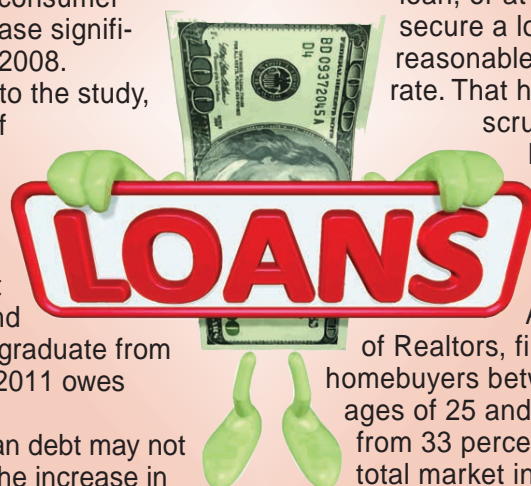
A study from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York released in May 2012 indicated that student loan debt is the only form of consumer debt to increase significantly since 2008.

According to the study, 40 percent of consumers younger than the age of 30 have student loan debt, and the average graduate from the class of 2011 owes \$23,000.

Student loan debt may not be new, but the increase in mortgage defaults since 2008 have led many risk-averse lenders to scrutinize borrowers

more carefully, and substantial student loan debts could make it more difficult for first-time homebuyers, the majority of whom are between the ages of 25 and 34, to secure a loan, or at least secure a loan with a reasonable interest rate. That heightened scrutiny could

be one reason that, according to the National Association of Realtors, first-time homebuyers between the ages of 25 and 34 fell from 33 percent of the total market in 2001 to 27 percent of the total market in 2011, the lowest market share in 10 years.



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Salary increase seen in all bachelor's degree categories

Bachelor's degree graduates from the class of 2012 had a small reason to be happier than those who graduated a year ahead of them.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, class of 2012 graduates who were able to find a job in a difficult job market earned an average salary that was 1.7 percent higher than the average salary earned by the class of 2011. Class of 2012 grads who landed a job earned an average of \$44,259 while 2011 grads earned an average of \$43,521.

Though such a small percentage increase may not seem like a significant step in the right direction, NACE notes that there were

increases in salaries among all broad categories of majors, suggesting that the job market is on the mend for new graduates regardless of their field of study.

Business and communications majors had a particularly good year, seeing their salaries climb 2.2 percent since 2011. Though their average salaries increased slightly less, engineering majors from the class of 2012 had the highest salaries of any academic discipline, earning an average of \$60,639, which marked a 1.9 percent increase from 2011.

Humanities and social services majors were on the opposite end of the spectrum, earning roughly \$37,000 in 2012, which was just 1.4 percent higher than the previous year.

Memory

other cold water fatty fish, in your diet. Research has shown that omega-3 fatty acids, which can also be found in walnuts, can boost brain power and possibly reduce your risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Foods with antioxidants, including fruits and vegetables, can also protect your brain cells from damage, which can have a positive impact on your memory. Leafy green vegetables like spinach, romaine lettuce and arugula as well as fruits like apricots, mangoes and cantaloupe are

good sources of antioxidants.

A diet high in saturated fat, which is found in red meat, whole milk, butter and cheese, has been found to have a negative impact on memory. Research has shown that such a diet increases a person's risk of developing dementia while impairing an individual's ability to concentrate and remember things.

Loss of memory is often a momentary lapse, but those who find themselves becoming more and more forgetful can take steps to improve their memory and their quality of life.

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Household member
- 4 Shock
- 8 Baby bed
- 12 Retirement plan acronym
- 13 Acknowledge
- 14 Humdinger
- 15 Sports fans' party site
- 17 With dexterity
- 18 Journey segment
- 19 Blue quality
- 21 Light color
- 24 Frat-party need
- 25 Matterhorn, for one
- 26 Slight touch
- 28 Staff members?
- 32 Pacific rings?
- 34 Standard
- 36 Bar
- 37 Red Square tomb occupant
- 39 Hee follower
- 41 Rage
- 42 Silent
- 44 Deceived
- 46 Lottery payment, perhaps
- 50 Legislation
- 51 Eye part
- 52 Exhaust

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18			19		20					
21	22			23		24						
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46	47	48			49		50					
51					52		53				54	55
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- outlet
- 56 Gambling game
- 57 Mexican entree
- 58 Pen point
- 59 Verve
- 60 Old World duck
- 61 Society newcomer

- 7 Adapt slightly
- 8 Din
- 9 Cartoonist Goldberg
- 10 Troubles
- 11 Purchases
- 16 Allow
- 20 Lair
- 21 Cover of gloom
- 22 Sheltered
- 23 Once around the track
- 27 Scrooge's cry
- 29 Aid when airborne
- 30 Hibernia
- 31 Coaster
- 33 Springfield surname

- 35 Aries
- 38 Greek consonants
- 40 Cricket-bat wood
- 43 Mongrels
- 45 Fool
- 46 Board game, cereal or magazine
- 47 Caspian Sea feeder
- 48 Actress Sorvino
- 49 "Just the facts, —"
- 53 "Rocks"
- 54 Slapstick missile
- 55 Recede

DOWN

- 1 Trench
- 2 Geological period
- 3 Severe decline
- 4 Rough, as rocks
- 5 Eggs
- 6 Oodles

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Solution is printed on page 3.

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Courtney Cox & Friends Scholarship



Pictured are, FROM LEFT, Courtney Cox & Friends Scholarship recipient Krystal Schuch (Newton) and scholarship representative Sara Alstat.

AMVETS Saksacks Unit 10 Scholarship



Pictured are, FROM LEFT, RLC Foundation CEO Shawna Hall and Jason Orkies (Mt. Vernon), recipient of the AMVETS Saksacks #10 Scholarship.

Amanda Peyton Memorial Scholarship



Pictured are Amanda Peyton Memorial Scholarship recipient Macey Reich-Ellis (Mt. Vernon, at right) and scholarship representative Kay Zibby-Damron.

Benton BPW Scholarship



Pictured are, FROM LEFT, RLC Foundation CEO Shawna Hall, and Whitney Webb (Benton), recipient of the Benton BPW Scholarship.

Andrea K. Boucher Memorial Scholarship



Pictured are, FROM LEFT, RLC Foundation CEO Shawna Hall, and Ashlee West (Pinckneyville), recipient of the Andrea K. Boucher Memorial Scholarship.

Blood continued from page 1

lar daily activities. It is advisable to take it easy for the rest of the day and not engage in any heavy lifting or exercise. Also, avoid flying in airplanes or going scuba diving for a couple of days afterward. Moderate daily activities should be fine. Continue to stay hydrated.

What are other things I should know?

You can prepare for donating blood by adhering to a healthy, low-fat diet and getting a good night's sleep the day before. Avoid alcoholic beverages and tobacco prior to the donation. Make sure you do not skip any meals.

Bring along a list of the medications you take to share with the volunteers at the blood drive. Certain medications will exclude you from donating.

It is possible for a healthy person

to give whole blood every 56 days. Donations of platelets or other components of blood may be able to occur more frequently. Individuals who have the universal blood type (Type O-) may want to sign up as frequent donors because their blood can be used for anyone.

Donating a pint of blood can help several different people. With extreme shortages in the blood supply in effect, now could be the ideal time to make a blood donation.

BLOOD TYPES

Blood type is broken down into four main types: A, B, AB and O. Genetics are the primary determining factor in a person's blood type. A child receives genetic code from both parents at conception, and this information will help determine blood type. Just like eye color, height and hair color, dominant genes will be the deciding factor in blood type. A and B are both dominant over O. A and B are considered to be codominant, which explains the AB blood type. If a child receives two

recessive genes from both parents, then he or she will have O blood.

Another thing that plays into blood type is the Rhesus factor, commonly shortened to the Rh factor. This refers to an antigen that exists on the surface of red blood cells. If this antigen is present, it means the person has a Rh positive (+) factor. If there is an absence of this antigen, then the blood is classified as Rh negative (-). Therefore, people can have an A, B, AB, or O blood type that is either (+) or (-). These antigens are proteins that, when introduced into a body that does not have the same type, can cause the person's immune system to respond by producing antibodies that attack the proteins. Should a person who is Rh- blood receive Rh+ blood during a transfusion, an allergic reaction could occur.

Another time when Rh factor comes into play is when an Rh- woman becomes pregnant. Should her blood and the blood of the fetus mix -- and if the fetus has an Rh+ factor -- the mother's blood may fight off the antigens and naturally produce antibodies. While this won't hurt the woman, it can affect the fetus and cause potential health problems. Women with an Rh- factor are generally given an Rh immunoglobulin about seven months into the pregnancy that should desensitize her immune system from triggering if the fetus has Rh+ blood. After the baby is born, his or her blood will be tested. Should the Rh factor match the mother, all is well. If not, the mother will receive another injection to further desensitize her immune system to prevent a reaction with any subsequent pregnancies.

A person with O- blood is considered a "universal donor." He or she can transfuse to anyone, and there will be no instances of allergic reaction. However, one with O- blood can only receive O- blood.



Solution to Crossword puzzle printed on page 2.

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	E	T		J	O	L	T		C	R	I	B
I	R	A		A	V	O	W		L	U	L	U
T	A	I	L	G	A	T	E		A	B	L	Y
		L	E	G		S	A	D	N	E	S	S
P	A	S	T	E	L		K	E	G			
A	L	P		D	A	B		N	O	T	E	S
L	E	I	S		P	A	R		R	A	I	L
L	E	N	I	N		H	A	W		I	R	E
		M	U	M		M	I	S	L	E	D	
L	U	M	P	S	U	M		L	A	W		
I	R	I	S		T	A	I	L	P	I	P	E
F	A	R	O		T	A	C	O		N	I	B
E	L	A	N		S	M	E	W		D	E	B



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