

Put Your Memory to Work

To put it simply, when information gets into your brain, it is first stored in your working memory. However, to keep your brain tidy, your working memory can only hold five to nine items at the same time for about twenty seconds. After that, they'll be either forgotten or saved for later use.

“Then how do I make sure the important information is saved?” you might ask. One good way is to keep reviewing it. Studies have shown that the more the information is repeated or used, the longer you'll remember it. What's more, try grouping the information. It's true that your working memory can't hold many items, but if you group them, it'll be easier to remember them. For example, it might be hard for you to remember these letters, “p-a-c-k-a-g-e.” However, if you group them into two sets: “pack” and “age,” then it's easier to remember the word “package.”