

Memory Games:

1. Brain Yoga

Take your left hand, make a fist, and extend your thumb; do the same with your right, only extend your pinky. Now switch them so it's left pinky and right thumb. Not so easy? The coordination involved will strengthen neural connections, which will help both memory and other gray matter functions.

2. The Tray Game

Ask a friend to grab a serving tray and a bunch of random items. Allow yourself a brief peek at the tray, then have it covered with a cloth. Try to remember all of the items. You can also look at a picture online, then minimize the browser and try to remember the contents.

3. Concentration Pairs

You've probably played a variation of the concentration game since childhood: Lay any number of cards face down, flip up two at a time, and try to match sets. But one way to make the exercise more engaging is to opt for the "spaghetti" variation—instead of neat rows of cards, try a messier arrangement. It will make the location of cards more difficult to remember.

4. The Suitcase Game

If you're in a group, you might be able to enlist some players for a roundtable memory game. The first person declares he or she is packing a suitcase with one item; the next person repeats the declaration and adds an item. A player is "out" when he or she misses a previously inserted item.

5. Jigsaw Puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles are a fantastic tool for engaging short-term memory, since your brain has to sort through a series of colours and shapes in order to assemble a visual picture. The more pieces, the harder your brain has to work, and the greater the reward: "Clicking" a piece in place has been shown to produce dopamine, which can help concentration. But if landscapes and exotic animals have left you bored, try a smaller puzzle and flip the pieces over so you're looking at only the blank side. With the color removed, you'll have to rely only on shapes.