

ACCELERATED LEARNING CRASH COURSE



How to Easily Learn New Skills and Subjects, Develop Laser-Sharp Focus, Triple Your Reading Speed and Improve Your Memory Ability!

Accelerated Learning Crash Course

- How to Easily Learn New Skills and Subjects • Develop Laser Sharp Focus • Triple Your Reading Speed • And Improve Your Memory Ability! •

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By the time you've read this guide, you'll have entered the elite ranks of the advanced learner. You'll know how to push your brain to bigger and better things and learn any skill or information you want to, without the difficulties that have always held you back.

But before you do, make sure you scroll down to download my **FREE bonus chapter** on how to stop procrastinating.

If there's one thing that gets in the way of achieving your dreams, it's dithering and dawdling rather than pushing towards them. In this free chapter, I will help you set aside that urge to procrastinate and start really achieving what you want to, right now!

This bonus chapter will not be available for long. Get it while you still can!



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Introduction

Imagine that you could pick up a manual or a book and learn everything inside it within a matter of hours. Imagine having the freedom to gather all the knowledge you've ever desired and parse it without missing a beat. Imagine that no learning was beyond your ability.

It may sound like a wonderful dream but, for some people, it's a basic reality. Those who have discovered advanced learning techniques are able to learn new information and store it away in their minds – and they can do so faster, more effectively and with less effort than their peers.

You've picked up this book because you, too, want to be able to enhance your memory and improve your learning skills. You want your brain to work at its optimum capacity and to unlock and make use of the deepest recesses of your memory.

Perhaps you struggled at school, finding it impossible to store away all those names and dates your teacher thought were so important. Maybe you feel frustrated trying to further your career, convinced that you don't have it in you to learn those new skills that keep appearing on the horizon.

The human brain is a mysterious and beautiful thing. It is not fixed and unchangeable; it has a never ending capacity to grow and improve. To make that happen, you need only follow the same instructions that fitness instructors have for your body. Keep exercising it and giving it the correct fuel and it will perform for you to the best of its ability.

In this book, you'll discover time honored and scientifically tested methods to improve your brain power. Together, we will work on both your memory and your learning skills, the two cornerstones of your ability to learn and understand anything and everything you have a mind to.

It all starts with learning skills: the ability to gather and acquire new information and fully understand it as you do. At the other end of the equation is your memory, where this new learning will be stored away until you need it alongside all the other skills and facts you've gathered in your life.

The stronger your learning skills, the more treasure you can add to the trove. The

more advanced the trove, the better you can organize that treasure, make connections between the items inside and use what you have available to you to make connections and innovate with your ideas.

What you are about to experience is a whole new way of thinking and learning. That may sound daunting, but as you progress through this book, you'll discover that it's easier than it seems. Once this ball begins rolling, your momentum will gather until Einstein himself would be proud of you.

Shall we jump straight in?

Inside Your Mind

You have just one brain in physical form, but three in terms of function. Before we can begin to improve how this vital organ works, it's important that you have a working knowledge of how it does its job.

Brain Stem

The first part of your brain is the stem, the same part that every creature on this earth has been blessed with. It's often referred to as the reptilian brain for this reason and is responsible for controlling the basic functions of your body, such as your breathing and blood flow, as well as instinctive behaviors.

A lot of the work of this first part of your brain is done without your knowledge and with very little need for your input. The times you may notice its influence are largely the moments you feel you are in danger, when your fear and anxiety takes over and your fight or flight response kicks in.

This part of your brain is thus your lowest order of thinking. While absolutely necessary for your survival, it can also block your ability to access higher thinking – which is why you'll hear people who have been physically attacked claim something along the lines of, "I don't know really what I did. I just did it".

The Limbic System

The mammalian brain is also something we share with many other forms of life – in this case, as the nickname suggests, other mammals. Much like the reptilian brain, it has a distinct function and operates largely without our input.

The limbic system takes charge of regulating such things as our immune system, our emotions and our sexuality. It is also responsible for the amygdala, hippocampus and thalamus – three areas of the brain that are intricately connected with our long term memory.

The thalamus accepts information from our senses and then sends it on to the correct part of the brain for processing. The amygdala analyzes information as it comes in for emotional significance and watches out for danger, of which it will instantly alert your brain stem. The hippocampus is your memory center, storing new information in the short term and deciding what should be stored on a longer term basis. It also retrieves those memories from deep storage when they are needed.

Because these three aspects of your learning and memory are controlled by the same area of your brain, they are connected in a very important way. Specifically, you'll find that any memory involving a strong emotion is remembered very well, because our limbic system coded it as important.

The Neocortex

The third part of your brain is the section that sets you apart from every other species on this planet, because it hosts the higher intelligence that makes us human. Here you will find reasoning, language, abstract thought and critical thinking.

To this area, your limbic system will send information as it comes in, directing it to the areas associated with vision, hearing, touch and speech. From these lobes, the information is processed and sent to the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for our working memory.

If the sensory cortex decides the information is worthy of being remembered, it gets sent back to the sensory cortex that processed it for long term storage. This, too, is important for our learning techniques as it means that visual memories are stored in the visual cortex, auditory in the auditory cortex and so on. This, in turn, means that information will be stored more effectively if it is learned in the first place using more than one of your senses.

Brain Waves

Connecting all of these areas are the brain waves that carry information back and forth; neurons that act like an enormous and incredibly complicated road network. Each of us has around 100 billion of these nerve cells, each of which can make up to 20,000 connections with their fellow neurons.

Along these paths, the brain sends minute electrical signals known as brain waves. These come in four main categories: slow delta waves during deep sleep; slightly faster theta waves for light sleep; beta waves that are faster than any other and represent a normal state of consciousness; and the slightly slower alpha waves that mean we are alert but relaxed and in our most efficient state for learning.

The Mindset of a Learner

Before you can plant a vegetable garden, you must till the soil and prepare the ground. The same is true for the exercises we are about to embark on to improve your learning and memory. The more fertile the soil we are working with, the better the results are going to be.

That means putting yourself in the right mindset to be a learner. Many people believe that their ability to learn and overall intelligence are fixed points and were determined by their DNA on the day they were born. A learner thinks differently: they believe that work and effort are just as important as what's written into their genetics.

Studies have shown that people who fall into the first category are a lot worse at learning new things because they hold the opinion that, if they can't do it right away, then they simply weren't built to be good at it. They see success as a signal that they should focus their efforts in one direction and failure as a sign that they should avoid paying any more attention in another.

To be a learner, you must put yourself firmly in the other category. You must understand and fully acknowledge that tackling a new subject or skill will always, always come with at least some measure of toil and trouble. Furthermore, you must understand that your efforts and hard work will help you progress through this challenge.

When you approach new areas of learning with this mindset, you do so with the right attitude to progress past the initial struggle and succeed – through effort that will sometimes be greater than at other times – in achieving your goal.

The second vital part of your new mindset is that you can no longer excuse yourself for not committing to a challenge and trying to beat it. We humans have a terrible habit of coming up with excuses before we ever give something a try, simply as an almost subconscious cushion that prevents us from having to fail.

We fear failure because failure appears to have implications. Our minds attempt to protect us from “knowing” that we weren't good enough to succeed in the first place, which understandably puts us in a state of emotional turmoil.

But while nurturing our own emotional wellbeing is great, it's also a huge hurdle

for you if you want to become an advanced learner. You may have already started looking for reasons not to try the techniques in this book – and, if you haven't, it may well not be long before they start popping into your head.

Deciding that your abilities are fixed and you can't fight nature to be good at things you weren't designed for is, in fact, a perfect example of one of these excuses. If you weren't manufactured to be a tight rope walker, what's the point in even trying? And, perhaps more importantly, how is it your fault if it's something you can't do?

This "reason" for not being able to succeed goes along with others along the same lines. Maybe you'll tell yourself you just don't have the time, or that you're too old for all this nonsense.

Or perhaps you'll decide that someone or something else is the real culprit for the failure you haven't actually experienced yet. Maybe you'll tell yourself that you can't learn from a book, because it's not the way you think, or that you don't have the support you need to keep working on the skills we'll be covering.

Or maybe you'll tell yourself it's all too much and you can't take on a challenge this big right now, it will be too time consuming and there's far too much to learn.

If and when you find yourself whispering excuses into your own ear, it's important that you learn to recognize them for what they are. Ask yourself if there really is any truth to what you're telling yourself. Are you really so busy that you can't build in half an hour today to work on your learning techniques? Or are you telling yourself that you're too busy because you fear the emotional consequences of discovering you can't do this?

The first phase of setting the right mindset to be an advanced learner taught you something very important to combat your own excuses. You acknowledged that there is nothing genetic that will stop you from succeeding – the only thing standing in your way is your willingness to make the effort.

This knowledge will help you banish those excuses as you hear them and throw off the shackles of your mind's own attempts to protect you. It will help you understand that only your own beliefs stand in your way of improving your brain.

It is what you believe about yourself that creates your personal truth, after all. If

you believe you have an awful memory, it's likely that you will act as though you can never remember anything. If you believe you are capable of extreme levels of concentration, then you will take actions that make use of this ability and thus prove yourself correct. Our beliefs are a hugely important factor in our reality for the simple fact that we then act on those beliefs and make them true.

You are what you think you are, in other words, so perhaps it's time to think of yourself as an advanced learner and release the limits your excuses and negative beliefs have had on your brain.

Most importantly, you must believe that you are already an advanced learner – as a human being, you were already born with amazing powers of concentration and a memory that already holds oceans of information and will continue to grow the more you put into it. That's an incredible gift and it's time to make use of it.

You must also believe fully in the importance of the journey you're taking. Improving your ability to learn and store information can only improve your life in its turn – the more information stored in that gray matter of yours, the more data you have available to make decisions, be creative and understand the world around you.

As a learner, you must accept and even relish the idea that you don't know everything already. You want to know everything – or at least as much as you can know – and so, in this state of mind, you will open yourself more fully to new information.

Finally, you must understand that failure does not even exist on this journey. If you forget something important or you can't seem to pick up a new skill or learn a list of figures, it's an opportunity, not a failure. It's a moment to examine your techniques, figure out where you're going wrong and make the right adjustments to do better.

There is no time like the present to get started. There is no time like the present to begin this journey. There is nothing stopping you from reaching the end of this journey unless you allow something to stop you – so let's start with those first few steps.

Starting From the Right Place

In the last chapter, we examined your thinking. We talked about the mindset of an advanced learner and how it differs from the thought patterns of a person who is hobbled by their own beliefs and excuses.

That was step one in your preparation process. Now that you have reviewed your thinking, you are in the right head space to improve your brain power. Your next task is to take practical steps to prepare yourself for this journey.

Consider this chapter to be much like preparing your ingredients before you begin cooking your meal. If you've chopped the onion and measured out the broth, you'll have an easier time creating the sauce than if you discover just as your butter begins to melt that you forgot the flour to thicken it.

Follow these practical steps to prepare your mind for the work that's about to begin:

Decide What to Learn – And Why

Your initial journey towards better learning techniques will have very clear objectives and reasons. You'll know why you're working on this skill and you'll know why it's important to you that you succeed.

But what of learning once you begin to set your own goals? How do you decide what exactly it is you want to learn?

It's all about motivation. Asking yourself what makes this skill or topic important and how it might be of use to you in life or improve your prospects in a particular area helps you to stay focused on the task, secure in the knowledge that what you are doing is meaningful to you.

Decide Your Goals

As you work through this book, you'll have plenty of very specific goals to work towards – but how you go about them will be up to you. It's not going to be helpful to think to yourself, well, I'll just sit down for a little while and see if I can learn some history. Instead, you want to be very clear about the amount of time you wish to spend and what exactly you want to have achieved by the end of it.

The goal is more important than the time you spend to achieve it, of course. If you tell yourself that you're going to spend an hour learning geometry, you can do pretty much anything associated with geometry during that time and still call it time well spent.

But if you have a specific piece of understanding or knowledge you want to have achieved by the end of that time, or if you want to have mastered a certain element of a new skill, your brain will automatically focus on making that happen in whatever way is necessary. Your results will be considerably more focused by the end of your time period.

And if you haven't managed to achieve what you set out to do? As a reminder, this isn't a failure. It's an opportunity to examine what happened and ask yourself why you did not reach your goal. Did it turn out to have been an unreasonable aim in the time period you set yourself? Is there a better way to work towards the goal than the one you chose? Ask yourself such questions and adjust your techniques accordingly the next time you sit down to work on your learning.

Choose a Place to Learn

It's much easier to get into the mental space to learn new things when you can switch into learning mode easily. Trying to combine your learning activities with cooking the family meal or doing the laundry, or trying to concentrate when surrounded by chattering house mates or jubilant kids, is quite frankly a difficult thing to ask of yourself.

So, before you begin, identify a space that is both easily accessible and outside your usual routine. Sitting in your usual armchair will put you more in the mood for your usual activities, such as watching the TV, so it can be helpful to take time out of that routine as you create your new one.

Your chosen learning space should be quiet and calming, welcoming to you while still being free from temptations and distractions. After all, you might have the willpower to resist picking up that gossip magazine and flicking through it halfway through your learning session, but wouldn't it be easier to concentrate if that magazine wasn't there at all?

Natural light is better than artificial and some find it helpful to have plants and flowers nearby as a connection to the calm of nature. Make sure everything in your space is clean, tidy and organized for much the same reason as you've put the gossip magazine in another room. You should be comfortable in both temperature and seating arrangements, in addition.

Choose the Right Time

We've all heard of early birds and night owls. Some of us think more clearly first thing in the morning, while others tend to do our best work in the dark hours of the late evening and others fall somewhere between. If you're not sure, watch your energy levels for the next few days to detect a pattern. When do you feel most lively and alert and when are you generally at your most productive?

It may not always be possible to choose that exact time for your learning exercises, but you can adapt your schedule to pick a time that follows your natural alertness as closely as possible.

Get Into an Alpha State

It's not a difficult thing to do, abstract though it might sound. It's actually all about relaxation. Sitting in a comfortable chair, letting your mind wander and not focusing on any specific problem will increase the alpha waves in your brain all by itself. Some experts recommend listening to a steady and non intrusive sound, such as a metronome, or meditating quietly.

The Silva Method is designed for beginners and is best performed in the mornings, just as you are waking up. Keep your eyes closed and look upward at an angle of around 20 degrees – this position tells your brain to produce alpha waves.

Count backwards from 100 very slowly, leaving a gap of a couple of seconds after each number. Focus on the counting rather than allowing your mind to wander. According to the Silva Method, designed by Jose Silva, you can do this for around ten mornings in a row before you can start to reduce the numbers you need to reach this alpha state. After the ten mornings, count down from 50, then from 25 and then from ten, as your mind becomes used to the technique.

Another method commonly used, if you find the Silva Method does not work for you or you prefer to concentrate on your learning techniques at another time of day, is to sit comfortably with your eyes closed and concentrate on a single part of your body – your foot, then your leg, then a hand and so on – and relax it consciously.

Open your eyes and choose a spot around 45 degrees above your eyes and gaze at it until your eyes begin to close on their own, then count down from 50.

Choose Your Music

Studies have shown that music is actually able to enhance the memories of people suffering from dementia related disorders, such as Alzheimer's. Classical music in particular was shown to improve scores for such patients on memory tests.

Other studies have shown that music engages the areas of your brain that are associated with paying attention, predicting and updating your memory. This was shown in a study at the Stanford University School of Medicine in California in 2007, when a research team used brain images from people listening to short symphonies from an 18th century composer.

Performing your brain training while listening to music is therefore almost certain to improve your results. Choose classical music and keep the volume low such that it does not intrude overtly on your thinking. It will still engage with your brain, but not intrusively.

Manage Your Energy Levels

If you're bursting with energy and finding it hard to keep still, your concentration will suffer. If you're tired and sloth-like and can barely read the words on the page, your concentration will suffer.

If you need to, take a quick nap or have an energy filled snack before your session, or take a brisk walk or perform a quick exercise session. Make sure that your energy levels are at a level that allows you to focus: high, but not too high that you would rather be doing something else.

The Three Types of Learner

Our minds collect and absorb knowledge in three main ways: through what we see, through what we do and through what we hear. Each of us has a preference, and it's good to know what yours is, but using these three methods together will be more efficient still.

How can you tell what kind of learner you are? Fortunately, the three types of learning are very distinct:

- Visual learners like to see what they are learning, so they respond well to photographs, charts, diagrams, videos and other visual aids. You probably fall into this category if you are a good reader and good at grammar, as well as if you are good at reading body language. A visual learner prefers to read for themselves and generally prefers art to music.
- A person who learns through doing enjoys a hands-on learning experience. They tend to be good at sports and find it difficult to sit still for too long, preferring to learn by trying something out or acting it out in some way. Touch is important to them, so if you are a hands-on learner it's likely you prefer to touch something to gain a better understanding of it, such as a complex machine or an animal.
- Auditory learners learn best with their ears, so they like to be taught using methods such as lectures and recordings, debates and discussion. They prefer to speak out loud and listen to others rather than write things down and it's common for this type of learner to enjoy music and prefer reading aloud or while moving their lips.

Most people find they are a combination of two when it comes to learning, or perhaps a mix of all three. Think about your experiences of learning so far – not just in school, but whenever you have set out to learn something new for yourself. How do you instinctively set about it and what does that tell you about your learning style?

If you can't think of an example, try an exercise. Imagine something that you would like to learn – perhaps something you intend to set about learning once you have mastered more advanced techniques. Write down an overview of how you would choose to go about learning it; for example, if you wanted to learn a language, perhaps your plan would be to purchase a language course as an audio book and work through it a chapter a day, making notes as you go to review later. This would tell you that you are an auditory and visual learner.

Once you have figured out your learning style, you can use this knowledge to maximize your learning capabilities. Some strategies for this that are recommended by educational strategists include:

Visual Learners

- Sit in a place where you have a clear view of the learning environment and can drink in as much visual information as possible.
- Use flash cards to learn new facts, words and statistics.
- Do your best to visualize new information in a way that makes sense to you, so that you have a visual cue to recall later.
- Make notes, writing down all the key pieces of information as you go.
- Draw pictures and diagrams of new information to help you digest and then recall it.
- Use color coding and other visual techniques to order your notes as you learn, giving your mind visual cues when searching through your knowledge to retrieve the specific piece you need.

Auditory Learners

- Position yourself where you can clearly hear everything going on around you in your learning environment.
- Use flash cards to learn new concepts, words and statistics, reading them out loud.
- Read your text books, informational booklets and other learning materials out loud to yourself.
- Record yourself talking through your topic and then listen back to it.
- Ask a second person to ask you questions or discuss your learning with you.

Tactile Learners

- Find hands-on activities that will help you understand a concept, such as building a working model or acting out a historical scene.
- Don't force yourself to keep still while learning – listen to a recording while taking a walk, keep hold of a fidget toy or simply walk around the room.
- Write notes or use a tablet or computer to create learning tools for yourself, introducing the sense of touch.
- Use flash cards and arrange them in front of you in a way that allows you to see the connections between ideas and concepts.

Remember, our brains store knowledge in areas that correspond with the sense that was used to acquire it, so it's always a good idea to make sure you are tapping into as many senses as possible. Once you have identified your strongest learning style, lean towards it as your primary method of acquiring information – but be sure to include the styles that are less prominent for you as well.

How can you do this? By making sure to include as many of your five senses as possible into every learning session, wherever possible.

Look at pictures of the information you want to learn, or draw your own – charts that link the data in ways that make sense to you and that you find interesting.

Listen to others talk about the information and discuss it with them in return, digging into the parts you find most interesting and then extrapolating to build a picture of the whole.

Use your sense of touch – build models, investigate examples of an item or piece of machinery, discover for yourself what a plant or a geologically interesting rock feels like, so that, when you think of that item, you can recall what it felt like against your fingers.

Smell and taste are a little more difficult to incorporate in a learning environment, but you can still come up with creative ways. If you are seeking to learn how to manage and run a ranch, for example, you might take some time to visit one so that you can breathe in the scents of the environment and try some raw milk from a dairy cow. Next time you are recalling your facts and figures about ranch management, your mind will recall those details and you'll almost smell and taste them all over again. This might not seem helpful when you're

trying to memorize economic techniques for making a ranch business profitable, but in fact they help your mind engage its creative mode and see the learning as a whole story rather than a set of boring facts.

Another way to make use of your senses is to make use of your imagination while you are learning something new. Let's say you've just read some information about how gas is delivered through the systems in a vehicle engine, as what you are learning today is how to become a mechanic. Simply memorizing the list of names is not going to do you much good.

Instead, find pictures of that system so you are able to visualize it, then close your eyes and do so. See the gas flowing through the engine, hear the noise it makes as it does, imagine the smell of the gasoline and the warmth of the engine's metal parts under your fingers as the engine does its work. What you now have is an image that can be easily recalled whenever you need it, and also a holistic picture of the system you were intending to learn.

The Creative Approach to Absorbing Information

Activating your imagination when it comes to learning is a very personal thing, but it's always strongly related to the concept of learning in as many different ways as possible – with your senses. The next step is to turn that learning journey into an adventure your mind is longing to take.

What do we mean by this? Well, as a human being, you are naturally creative. You may not be a sculptor or an architect, but think about what you do and achieve on a daily basis. A homemade meal, a tidy and well ordered home, a presentation given to your colleagues – all these things and many more are the result of your brain taking a look at the world and knowing how it would like to re-order it in creative ways.

It's because we're creative creatures that we enjoy stories – we can visualize the characters and create pictures of the places in our minds. This is true even in learning – I'll bet that, if you think back to your history class at school, you can remember the tale of a prominent figure such as Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln or General Eisenhower much more clearly than you remember the vague details of battle movements, economic growth and political connections that come part and parcel with a history lesson.

So what can we take from this fact? Most importantly, that information needs to take on a life of its own for you before your brain will take note of its significance and make an effort to store it in the long term for you.

The best learners in the world are the ones who can apply this creativity to almost any learning activity. They might be presented with a simple list of dates to learn, but they instinctively start telling themselves simple stories about how February 9 is good friends with February 17 but neither of them like April 3. That might sound silly, but it's a very simple example of how you can bring new information to life.

Adding Story Elements

There's a lot to be learned from novels, movies and plays. We humans tell each other stories in very distinctive ways, and we do so because we are hard wired to pay attention to tales for more than just our pleasure. Think of ancient days, far before a time of tablets and smart phones, before television kept us entertained in the evenings, when most people didn't know how to read and write.

Information, back then, was passed on in the form of stories. Most myths you hear from ancient folk are actually cautionary tales or pieces of learning disguised in stories that are easy to remember and understand. Thus information that a person might dismiss or forget is given a meaning that will stick more strongly in their mind.

Some ways you can incorporate story elements into even the most bland information include:

- Create a cast of characters for yourself. This might mean introducing people to a setting, or perhaps turning the elements of your learning themselves into the cast. If you were attempting to learn the properties of precious gemstones, for example, you could choose to imagine an Indiana Jones-style figure walking through a marvelous cave of wonders, or you could make Amethyst and Beryl characters in themselves and understand their properties as their individual characters.
- Exaggerate pieces of information to bring them to life. Your Amethyst, for instance, needn't be a simple, small stone. She could be a larger-than-life shining purple rock with a regal crown. Give her hair and jewelry to make her look like a high class lady and a scepter she wields to show everyone how important she is. Amethyst, to you, is no longer a flat and boring name for a precious stone. You know she's associated with February as a birth month because you gave her a warm cloak to keep her warm and you know it has a hexagonal crystal system because you gave six points to her crown. When you try to recall "amethyst" as a concept, she is what will spring into your mind – along with all the silly, funny exaggerated "facts" you added to her character.

- Bring the stories you are telling yourself to life – add a narrative that makes sense with the overall topic you are trying to learn. Amethyst, for instance, is interesting to you because you are learning about gemstones as a whole and you want to recall where in the world each precious stone can be found. Some amethyst is produced in volcanoes, along with others including obsidian – perhaps you could visualize Obsidian, another character, fleeing down the side of a volcano hand in hand.

All of these methods may sound silly – even ridiculous – but you’ll be surprised how much information you can store by incorporating storytelling techniques. As you continue to look at and test advanced learning methods, keep in mind that the way you approach information should always be guided by the way your mind works in the first place. For thousands of years, your ancestors have used stories for learning – and it’s a method that will work just as well for you, too.

The Spectrum of Intelligence

The third and final fact about the human brain that we will be bringing into play in this journey is that there is no such thing as intelligence. At least, not the intelligence we identify and define today.

We've been schooled to think of "IQ" as a fixed measure of this so-called intelligence without realizing that it can only measure certain parts of your ability and completely ignores certain others. In turn, if we find out or suspect that we do not have a high number attached to our IQ, we tend to think learning isn't something we're capable of doing.

Actually, intelligence is made up of a number of different skills that can all be exercised, practiced and improved. This new and improved theory of intelligence was first posited by a professor at Harvard University by the name of Howard Gardner and comes from cognitive research in recent years.. He described intelligence as the ability to "solve a problem or fashion a product that is valued in one or more cultural settings".

Gardner's theory suggests that we are all able to know the world through these types of intelligence, but we differ in the strength we show in each one and how we choose to combine and use them to carry out tasks and solve problems.

Just as it's important to know what kind of learner you are, it's vital to be aware of your own intelligence because it, too, will have a strong impact on how you learn most effectively.

Take a look at each of the seven intelligences in turn and consider them carefully. Decide how strongly the definition applies to you. Is it your main strategy when it comes to problem solving and performing tasks? Is it a skill you sometimes make use of to complement other tactics? Or is it something you rarely use and would choose as your strategy only if necessary?

By doing so, you can not only put together a picture of your own intelligence, you can take note of the learning strategies attached to that kind of intelligence and ensure that you are using them wherever possible. Just like your learning style, the make-up of your intelligence can guide you towards choosing the learning strategies that will work best for your own mind.

Visual-Spatial

Those strong in this type of intelligence think in terms of physical space and are acutely aware of the environment around them. They are map readers, jigsaw puzzle aficionados and architects and usually enjoy drawing.

Strategies for learning include:

- Learning maps.
- Visualizations of the data in your own mind.
- Creating visual representations of the information, such as infographics, posters or videos.

Bodily-Kinesthetic

Those strong in this type of intelligence are able to make effective and extensive use of their own body. Examples might include a sculptor who is capable of carving fine details with ease, a surgeon or a dancer. They are strongly connected to their sense of touch, great at interpreting body language and like to move and make things.

Strategies for learning include:

- Using sticky notes or index cards for small nuggets of information, placed in random places around the building or room that you must make an actual, physical journey between.
- Making models, recreations and other physical items.
- Using motion to act out certain pieces of information physically.

Musical

While obviously lovers of music, people with this kind of intelligence are also extraordinarily sensitive to all sounds and are sensitive to rhythm.

Strategies for learning include:

- Use music as background noise while you are learning.
- Summarize the data in musical form, such as by making up “jingles” or whole songs.

Interpersonal

This kind of intelligence drives a person to interact with other people and understand them. These are people with lots of friends and high levels of empathy and “street smarts”.

Strategies for learning include:

- Pairing up with another learner to discuss the information.
- Finding a mentor or teacher willing to give you the information one on one.
- Comparing your understanding or opinions with someone else.
- Teaching another person.

Intrapersonal

A person high in this kind of intelligence is very much in tune with their own goals and interests and tends to have less interest in other people. They are wise, intuitive and highly motivated and have a strong understanding of their own internal world, as well as a strong level of confidence, lots of opinions and impressive willpower.

Strategies for learning include:

- Thinking about why the information you have learned is important to you.
- Considering how the data fits with what you already knew and reordering your thoughts to incorporate it.
- Focusing on the people involved in the information and their backgrounds.

Linguistic

This intelligence allows a person to use words particularly effectively. They tend to have highly developed auditory skills and think in words. They also enjoy reading, writing, poetry, story telling and word games.

Strategies for learning include:

- Paraphrasing the learning materials in your own words.
- Summarizing important information
- Writing essays, articles or stories that focus on and explain the subject matter in hand.

Logical-Mathematical

A person high in this kind of intelligence focuses on calculating and reasoning. They think in the abstract, considering concepts, and can spot patterns and relationships. This type of intelligence drives a person to ask the big questions, experiment and look for puzzles.

Strategies for learning include:

- Using a numbered sequence to logically list the main parts of the information.
- Timelines and charts as tools to present the information.
- Asking yourself questions about the material to take a closer look at it; for instance, considering the evidence for the argument, whether the same thing can be seen in other examples and how it might connect to other facts or concepts.

Now you know what kinds of learning will best suit your brain and its strengths, let's move on to consider some practical techniques for advanced learning.

How to Take Notes

Whether you are watching a video, listening to a lecture, reading a book or gathering information in any other way, there is one element of your learning that should never be ignored. To be an advanced learner, you must always, always be taking notes.

Having read the previous chapters, you already have an inkling of why this is so important. Your notes are how you record the information that you are being given and allow your brain to start planning how to store them in your memory banks.

The reason they must be your own notes rather than a text book or handout created by someone else is likewise probably more obvious to you than it would have been before you began reading this book. Your learning style is unique and deeply personal, so only you can put the information together in the best way to suit your own mind.

Back in your school days, you probably scribbled down what the teacher was saying in your notebook under the heading “geography” with a few doodles in the corner and never looked at it again until you were cramming for a test, at which point you didn’t find it very helpful. That’s because true learning at an advanced level is not nearly so simple as scribbling.

Instead, you will need to get into the habit of tackling your notes in several stages. It’s important to do each one, and do it properly, because this is how the information will go from the book or video to the lockbox of your memory.

Stage 1: Taking Notes

This is the obvious step, where you write down all the facts and figures and arguments and ideas that are pertinent to what you are specifically trying to learn. During this stage you might be, for example, reading a book on the topic of interest and noting down the information as you go; or you may be sat in a lecture hall writing down all the facts that you feel are important.

However the information is coming to you, your job here is to catch all the most important pieces and get them down on paper. Use bullet points, headings and other visual aids wherever you can, make a note if you think it's something you will want to explore more deeply or in a different way later and make a mark if it's something you didn't quite understand and needs further research.

You may just be capturing information, but your mind is already editing it down during this first stage. You are parsing what you are seeing or hearing and only writing down the parts that matter to you – especially in a fixed setting such as a lecture hall, you simply don't have time to write absolutely everything.

Stage 1: Editing Your Notes

When you come back to your notes later, they will be the only record of the information gathering you did. It's best to tackle the editing stage fairly quickly after you first made the notes because the whole idea of doing so is to preserve your memory of that information gathering exercise before it fades and disappears.

What you are doing now, therefore, is preserving that information in a way that will be useful to you in the future. Some people find it helpful to imagine they are writing up the data for someone else in a way that they will be able to understand without having had the benefit of watching that video or reading that book.

In this stage, you will be writing up your notes bit by bit, taking time out to do that further research for clarification or to find the additional information you felt was missing for you.

Depending on your learning and intelligence styles, you can choose to do this in many different ways. You may wish to simply write out the information more clearly, reordering it as necessary so that it fits in a better order for your understanding and adding color, headings, bullet points and other aids to help you navigate through it the next time you want to review the information.

You might want to adapt some of the information into graphs, charts or other visual aids to portray that information in a more understandable light. You might want to find and add photographs, diagrams and other images that illustrate a point better than words can do.

Perhaps you would prefer to disseminate the entire set of information as an infographic or make a video, song or other recording. However you choose to refine your notes, the only stipulation is that you create a permanent record of your learning that you can return to in the future.

Stage 3: Analyzing Your Notes

Now your notes are complete and the information is presented in the best possible way for you to consume it, go through it again and review it with a more critical eye.

Look for links between the different facts; ask yourself how this new information relates to what you already know; make connections to other concepts; consider what you might need to add to this data to further your understanding even more.

Take your learning section by section and attempt to boil it down to the smallest sentence, picture, action or jingle possible – something you can remember very easily. Common techniques for this include acrostics, which involves using the first letter of each word, line or paragraph to spell out a word or message, and mnemonics, such as to create a word or phrase from a list (for example, to remember the seven conjunctions in the English language as FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So).

Stage 4: Reflect on Your Notes

This stage is particularly important for aural learners and those high in interpersonal intelligence. Now you understand your notes and have placed the information inside them in an understandable order, test that out by involving yourself in a discussion about it.

Explore and analyze the information with another person or as a group. Ask questions about it, consider the implications and your opinions. This will increase your conceptual understanding of the notes and the information within them and elevate your learning from simple fact gathering to a stage at which you can use what you've learned to drive your decisions and help you solve problems.

Speed Reading

To take notes and research your topic will almost certainly involve cracking open a book at some point – so much of human knowledge is written down, whether it be on physical pages or in the recesses of the internet. An advanced learner wants to be able to absorb as much of this knowledge as possible, but time, as usual, is of the essence.

To gather as much information as you can in the limited time you have available to you, it helps to learn how to read more quickly and efficiently.

A method that has seen remarkable success was devised by Tim Ferriss and tested on students at Princeton University. He called it the PX Project, a three-hour experiment that increased his subjects' reading speed to almost four times what it was when they started.

The method involves learning to not read in a straight line, but rather in a series of jumps, each of which ends with you fixating on a particular part of the text and taking a “snapshot” of it in the space of half a second. It also helps you eliminate “conscious re-reading” and skipping back in the text and uses what Ferris calls central focus without horizontal peripheral vision span during reading. Finally, mastering this technique means that you should practice at three times the speed that you ultimately want to be able to read; so, if you want to be able to read two pages every minute, you must practice reading six.

Ferriss's method goes as follows:

- Find a book of at least 200 pages that will lay flat when it is open, as well as a pen and a timer. Make sure you have at least 20 minutes of free time.
- Determine your current reading speed by figuring out the average number of words per page in your book. Start your timer and read for exactly one minute.
- Now to begin the practice. Use your pen to underline every line of text as you read it, ignoring comprehension of the words and attempting to spend a maximum of one second on each line. Do

this for two minutes.

- Now, increase your speed as much as possible for another three minutes.
- For the next minute, repeat the exercise but do not underline the first and last word of each line. Now reduce this further to leave out the first two and last two words for one minute. Now, for three minutes, reduce this even further to begin three words into the line and end with three words left to go.
- Finally, test your reading speed again, just as you did when you began this exercise. Do not worry that you probably did not comprehend a lot of what you just read – by continuing to practice this technique, you will gradually increase the amount you are absorbing while you read.

This method has worked countless times, but there are other ways in which you can supplement it – or replace this technique altogether, if it does not suit you. Some tips to increase your reading speed:

- Work to drop your habit of saying the words that you are seeing in your head. We all do it, but it isn't actually necessary. We are able to process words more quickly than we can say or hear them, so reducing this tendency will allow you to absorb the words significantly more quickly.
- Make use of the end of a pen or a similar pointer to keep your place in the text, reducing your tendency to flick your eyes backwards and forwards in the text and helping you focus entirely on the words you are currently reading.
- Practice reading multiple words at one time. Begin by attempting to read two words at once, thinking of them as connected items, and then increase this so that you are reading three or four at a single glance.

These techniques will help you read more quickly, but that's only one step

towards your goal. As an advanced learner, you also want to be able to pick out the information that matters most to you and reject the clutter that has no bearing on the topic at hand.

The best way to do this is to examine the material before you read it, looking at the back cover, the introduction and any other summaries available. A lot of the time, you'll find that the summaries contain most of the information you were looking for, allowing you to then skim through the book to find the supporting data that will help you parse and understand that information.

Skim through by reading the beginnings of each chapter, skipping over any illustrative stories or chapters that are not relevant to your learning needs. Once you are done, you will have a good idea of which parts of the book are the most valuable to you and you can go back and read those in more depth to gather the exact information you are looking for.

As you do this final part of your task, switch your brain over into analysis mode. You are not simply reading the words and hoping they jump into your memory – now, you want to retain as much as possible as you go.

The best way to do this is to ask questions of yourself about the text while you are reading it, even if that increases the amount of time it takes to read. What does this new information mean to your overall knowledge on this topic? Why is it important? Does it go against what you have already learned or does it fit within that whole easily? How could you summarize this new information in a single sentence?

By the time you have concluded your reading with these new techniques, you should find that you have absorbed this book considerably more quickly than you could have before you improved your reading speed and that you can recall the important information much more easily – and in the right context, to boot.

Practice Makes Perfect

If you ever tried to learn a musical instrument as a child or wanted to participate in a sport, it's unlikely you made it far without someone using the phrase that "practice makes perfect". It's one of life's most commonly used clichés, but that doesn't make it any less than true.

If the learning you are attempting is intended to help you acquire a practical skill, such as learning a language or sport or musical instrument or how to fix a car or how to cook, it's not enough to simply read about it or watch videos. Even your notes are only going to get you so far – before you can turn those notes into knowledge, you're going to need to give this new skill a try for yourself.

However, the practice you will be doing is not the same as those long-gone days when you sat in front of a piano and begrudgingly played the notes of "Chopsticks" over and over while a parent nodded in the background. There's a reason most kids resent the idea of being made to practice their skills: we're not teaching them to practice in a way that is both efficient and fulfilling.

You are not simply going to sit down and repeat the same exercise day after day, hoping you'll get better at it and feeling both bored and frustrated while you do. Instead, you're going to take a more structured approach.

Your goal, when practicing, is to focus on the small skills that make up the large one. For example, let's say that you are hoping to learn to be a public speaker. That overall skill is made up of a myriad of others, such as making eye contact, pacing words, learning scripts, bodily movements, making your voice carry and many more. The same is true for any skill, so start by considering all the different smaller goals you want to meet.

List all of the small sub skills that will be involved in mastering this new talent – spend some time doing this, to be sure you are capturing them all – and then look at each one with a critical eye. Which of them is your weakest area? Which needs the most practice for improvement?

Any machine is only as strong as its weakest part and the same goes for learning a new skill. Your goal with a practice session will, therefore, be to improve that weakest sub skill until it rises past the level of the next weakest sub skill, then

switching your attention to the new weakest sub skill and so on.

As you continue to practice, take time out every so often for analysis. Look overall at your skill level and identify the areas where you are not yet confident. Refocus your practice sessions to concentrate on those areas, slowly progressing your overall talent by improving the areas that need it the most.

The second important element of a practice session for advanced learning is to set goals for yourself. These must be realistic for the space of time you are going to spend in your practice room – you are not going to learn to paint like Monet in half an hour and you're also not going to be fluent in French by the end of today.

So what would a realistic goal be? As a novice painter, perhaps your goal for this session is to learn to hold the brush correctly and to feel comfortable doing so. Tomorrow, you will continue this practice with the aim of being able to hold the brush correctly without even thinking about it, such that proper technique comes absolutely naturally.

Don't be afraid to adjust your goals. Maybe what seemed like a simple task is, in fact, something that only comes with time. Perhaps you discover that an hour session is not enough to feel completely natural with a paint brush and decide you will need to continue incorporating this into your sessions over the next week.

Breaking your skill down into its elements and setting yourself achievable goals that lead you in the right direction towards your overall desire is very different to throwing a ball repeatedly at your father's glove when you were a kid. It will enable you to progress in a logical and appropriate manner, seeing constant improvements along the way and ensuring that your weakest links get enough attention to prevent them from keeping you back. In time, you'll find that you have learned your new skill far better than you would by simply repeating the same exercise an infinite number of times.

Improving Your Memory

As you now know, your memory is split into more than one type. As well as your long term memory, you also have a short term version that acts as your “working” memory and the sensory memory that absorbs information in the first place from the world around you.

To learn in an advanced manner, your end goal is of course to make sure that as much information as possible is pushed through to your long term memory, but that can only properly be achieved by strengthening your short term and sensory memory at the same time.

The first step to solidifying a memory in your long term storage banks is encoding, which is the moment when information is discovered in the first place. At that moment, your brain needs to link the data to something that is familiar and important to you in order to signal that it is worth holding on to.

The second stage is storage, which is the retention of that new memory through practice in some manner. And finally there is retrieval, which is when you bring that memory back out of your memory banks and use it in some manner.

Why is all this important? Because the best and most efficient way to improve your memory is to tackle all three of those stages properly.

In other words, you need to both encode your memory properly and then store it in an accessible manner and then be able to retrieve it quickly whenever relevant. You have limited control over the inner workings of your brain, of course, so improving these stages must be done in an indirect manner.

It’s important to remember that you receive a lot more information through your senses in the space of a day than you can possibly realize. Every moment, you are taking in data through all of your senses in some manner and not all of it deserves to be stored. That’s where your brain steps in – to ensure you keep hold of the memory of hugging a loved one, because it’s important to you, while getting rid of the unnecessary memory of scratching the end of your nose.

The information you are deliberately trying to learn is automatically flagged as important because you are making a conscious effort to learn it. But how can you make sure that memory sticks when experts estimate we’ve forgotten half

the information we learned just three weeks later and only keep hold of a tenth of it by the time two months have passed?

The best way to do this is to expose yourself to the same information multiple times over a long period. Do not try to learn a new topic over the space of a single weekend; instead, space out your learning so that you are looking at the information for an hour or so every day over the course of a few weeks.

During that time, your brain will start to make the connections it needs between the elements of the information and between this new data and the things already stored in your memory. It will build the infrastructure that is necessary not only to store the information, but to do so in a way that makes sense for your own mind.

Do this by, for example, reading through the information on the first day, making notes on the second day, reviewing the notes on day three, trying to recall the information without your notes on day four, reviewing your notes again on day five, recall the information again on day six and so on. None of this will take a large amount of time and the hours in between allow your brain to do its own work to help you recall it.

Also bear in mind that the process of making connections happens largely when you are asleep, so spacing out your learning gives you plenty of hours of slumber for your brain to make synaptic connections.

As you look at the information again and again, you'll notice that you are becoming more familiar with its content and you are thinking about it in different, deeper ways, automatically making connections and relating it to other things that you already know or would like to find out. This analysis is the final step to making sure that your brain pushes the information securely into your long term memory.

Of course, your memory will begin to fade after a while even when you follow this technique, and that's where your notes come in handy. Make sure to set aside some time once every six months or once per year to look through all the new learning you have done in that time, reviewing your new knowledge and consolidating it (especially if you've been focusing on a single kind of learning, such as history or candle making techniques).

Look at how all that knowledge fits together and actively ponder what it means

when you look at the big picture. By doing this, you will create even more connections and strengthen your recall once again.

In the next chapter, we'll take a look at some other techniques you can make use of when absorbing new information to help you improve your encoding, retention and retrieval even more.

Memory Techniques

A lot of people think they have a terrible memory and find it impossible to remember phone numbers, facts and other snippets of information when they want to. Actually, as we've just discovered, that's not really the case – they simply haven't discovered the best methods for their own individual mind to make that learning stick.

To help with that, let's review some tried and tested memory boosting techniques for you to try. They may not all suit your unique way of thinking, but it's certain you'll find at least one or two you can make use of when you are learning something new:

- **Decide to Remember:** This may sound obvious, but think back to what we discussed in the previous chapter. Your brain needs to know that information is important to you, and telling it directly that you consider it vital is a fairly obvious way of making sure it does. The next time you are told a fact that interests you, given somebody's address or come across a new piece of information while reading, pause for just a moment. Tell yourself consciously and deliberately that you want to remember that piece of information.
- **Use Your Senses:** As we've already discussed, information comes into your brain from all five of your senses and, the more senses it attracts, the better your chance of retaining it because the more places it will be stored. Involve your senses as much as you can in your learning – find ways to touch, taste, smell, hear and see the information wherever you can. Obviously not every sense will be relevant in every case, but get creative and you'll find plenty of ways to at least use your ears and eyes and mouth in your learning.
- **Use Mnemonics:** Mnemonics are memory devices in which you organize information in the form of a list, a word, a poem and so on. A good example of a musical mnemonic is the ABC song most children use to learn the alphabet, using the melody as an anchor to

recall the individual letters. A name mnemonic involves reorganizing the first letter of each item in a list to create the name of a person or thing; a model mnemonic involves creating a diagram or image of the information that you can easily bring to mind.

- **Make Information Important:** When we discussed taking notes, we talked about color coding your writing and adding pictures and diagrams. This technique is also important to your memory, because it highlights clearly the pieces of information that are the most important to your conscious mind. Your subconscious will follow suit, taking the cue that you consider this data to be vital and storing it accordingly. The more you do this, the more you train your brain to look for the items you consider important and store them.
- **Make Connections:** Memories in your brain are not stored in separate boxes, completely apart from one another. There are links between those boxes, created to help you make sense of the world. For instance, when you think of a dining table, you may also think of Thanksgiving, a set of cutlery your grandparents once used and the overall idea of dinnertime. These are separate items of information, but your brain has linked them together because they are connected in some way. It's not always as obvious as the fact that cutlery is used at the table and once a year it's used for a holiday meal, but this example does illustrate how connected your knowledge can be. A great way to improve your recall is to deliberately make those connections – stop for a moment when you've absorbed a piece of information and think about how it connects to your knowledge base as a whole.
- **Tell Stories:** As we've mentioned before, human beings are great at remembering stories – we are perhaps better at recalling a good tale than anything else we encounter. If it's appropriate to the knowledge you want to recall, turn it into a story – write it down that way in your notes. If it doesn't seem appropriate, think a little harder. Perhaps you're learning the periodic table of elements as

part of understanding chemistry better. Can you create a story about the relationships between those elements? It can be as whimsical as you like, such as imagining hydrogen as lots of little water fairies buzzing around the universe, while helium, a noble gas that shares its light elements, floats nearby shaking his head in disgust.

- **Organize the Data:** This is another technique you can make use of during your note taking. Reorganize your knowledge into a new pattern, one that makes more sense to you. Organize lists of items into categories or concepts into batches that fit together well according to your overall understanding of a topic. How you do this will be very personal – some people might prefer to list things by concept, others by visual similarity and so on. The advantage here is that you have given yourself a category to remember. Much like the card boxes in an old library, this means you only have to root through a small list of categories to find the right area for remembering your data, rather than trying to sort through the entire breadth of information stored in the library of your mind.
- **Test Yourself:** The only way to know if you recall a set of data is to test your memory to prove it to yourself. However, it's also a great tool for learning the information in the first place, so it's a good idea to build testing into your study sessions. For instance, you could spend one session reviewing the dates of different battles in a war and then the next session attempting to recall that information by writing it down – it can be as simple as that. Reviewing your results will also keep you up to date with the areas that still need more work to make sure your knowledge is properly stored.
- **Create Flashcards:** These handy little tools are great as a memory aid because they combine note making with testing yourself. On one side of the card, write a prompt or question; on the other, write the answer. Test yourself frequently with the flashcards to see how well you have recalled information. Once you have it down to a fine art, set those flashcards aside and review them again after a

period of time has passed, when the memory has begun to fade. Finally, to really cement that knowledge, it can help to create a new set of flashcards that presents the information in a different way or comes at the knowledge from a new angle. This will stimulate your brain to start making new connections and look at the knowledge differently, which will make sure it is encoded properly.

Self Discipline

All of the advanced learning techniques we have learned so far in this book have something in common: they will not work for you without an element of self discipline. If you think about the most successful businessmen, scientists, academics and experts in the world, you'll quickly notice that they all invest time and effort into thriving within their field.

There's no such thing as a free lunch, as they say, and this is especially true for mastering a new skill or embarking on a new area of learning. As you have read through these chapters, did you find yourself thinking that the techniques described seemed too time consuming or difficult?

Did you think that perhaps you could short cut your way through them or tackle this another time, when you are more free to do so? Maybe, or maybe not, but the big question is: have you begun to put any of them into practice yet?

The majority of people are content to simply let life happen around them, happy with the idea that things always get better even if we don't do anything to make them better. Unfortunately, this is a fallacy. You will not become an advanced learner without putting the effort in to achieve it.

And so, first you must visualize what it is you want to achieve and list all the reasons why it is important to you. The more you believe that this learning will enhance your life, and the more ways in which you think it will do so, the more you will feel energized to achieve it.

Next, you need to set yourself the right goals. These need to be specific so that you have a very definite end point in mind – a moment when you feel that you have achieved the learning you set out to achieve and are content with what you have done.

You should also determine how you're going to tell what progress you've made, so that you can measure it as you go along. Is it that you have learned to conjugate a certain number of verbs this week in French? That you are now able to recall a certain amount of facts? That you can play a certain song on the guitar? What are your incremental goals?

Be sure that both your end goals and the steps in between can actually be

achieved. You need high standards, but also attainable ones – your willpower will only ever suffer from shooting for unreachable stars. You should also set yourself time limits and deadlines to keep your focus straight and narrow and encourage you to work towards your goals in a timely and consistent manner.

With your planning achiever, you must now consciously and deliberately make the decision you are going to do this. The commitment you make must be iron clad and unbreakable – you must be prepared and willing to change your life at least in a small manner to incorporate the work you'll need to do to achieve this goal.

The little voice in your mind may try to convince you to go against this commitment – it's perfectly natural, but it's not going to get you to your goal. Telling yourself you can do this tomorrow, that you're too busy, that you have other responsibilities, that you're too tired will not move you towards your vision. This voice must be banished and ignored.

And finally, you must build yourself a schedule, setting aside time every day to work on your learning. Recall that we discussed repetition as an important tool for memory? Setting aside small portions of time every day is vital for your learning to be as effective as possible. Once you have carved out this time and space, you must then follow through and keep up your new habits even as the initial excitement begins to wear off.

Only you can make this change in your life and become an advanced learner. Fortunately, you also possess all the tools that you need to make it happen.

Fuelling Your Brain

One final note about becoming an advanced learner: to support your efforts, it's important to give your brain the fuel it needs to work effectively. Your body really is a machine and, just like your car, it will only function as well as the fuel you put into it.

Fuel, in human terms, is of course the food and drink you take in. While sleep and oxygen are equally vital, it goes without saying that you should be getting a decent night's rest and filling your lungs with fresh air. Exercise is also important to keep your blood flowing well and your body alert and supple.

But food and drink can be less obvious, because it's easy to think of every ingredient as equal. A balanced diet is important and we all know that we should concentrate on eating healthily, but there are a few additional elements that an advanced learner might want to bear in mind.

There are specific foods that can enhance your brain power – and dramatically so, too, because the food you eat has more impact on your brain and its performance than anything else you can control.

Try to include some of these food categories in your diet to boost your brain power and support your learning efforts as you embark on this journey:

Polyphenols

These antioxidants are found in the blue, purple and dark red parts of plants. They assist you in protecting against cellular damage, protecting your gut, improving blood flow to your brain and, most importantly, increasing your rate of neurogenesis. This process involves forming neurons in your brain, a vital element of learning and something that happens throughout our lives. Obviously, if you want to create those all-important neural connections, it helps to fuel your brain with the food it needs to do this efficiently.

Unfortunately, though it's quite easy to find sources of polyphenols, it's not so easy to absorb them. For the most part, your body needs some help in the form of fats. In other words, you should consume your polyphenol sources with a side helping of good fats to help with the absorption process.

Great sources of polyphenols include coffee and dark chocolate, as well as fresh fruits including blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, pomegranates and grape seeds and skins and vegetables such as red onions, artichokes and spinach. Cloves are the richest source of all, while other seasonings you may want to include in your diet are peppermint and star anise. Black and white beans are good sources, as well as nuts such as almonds and pecans.

Remember, a source of fat in addition to these ingredients is vital to ensure those polyphenols are absorbed and can be used.

Fats for Brain Power

Fat has become a dirty word in nutritional circles, which is a very bad thing for our brains. This vital part of our diets speeds up the energy production in your brain and makes it more efficient – not to mention that our brain cells and their insulation are both made of fat and require plenty of the stuff to keep them at top efficiency.

One of the best types to bring back into your diet to boost your brain power is stable saturated fat, which you will find in grass-fed animal meat and fat and pastured egg yolks.

It's also important to include monounsaturated fats such as olive oil and omega-3 fatty acids found in seafoods such as mackerel, wild trout and anchovies.

Foods for Neurotransmitters

A second category of important foods are the ones that support your neurotransmitters, the chemicals that carry messages between your neurons. The hundred or more unique types of neurotransmitter inside you control almost everything you do.

- For dopamine, which improves your decision making and motivates your willpower by rewarding you with a flood of happy feelings, you need sunlight and one kind of specific amino acid found in beef, poultry, avocados and almonds and a second found in sardines, bacon, beef, liver and almonds.
- For norepinephrine, which makes your brain jump into action and helps form memories, you need the same foods as above, but also vitamin C to convert them from green vegetables and citrus fruits.
- For serotonin, which affects your mood and helps you sleep, you need a precursor called L-tryptophan that is found in lamb, beef, chicken, turkey, mackerel, almonds, cashews and hazelnuts.
- For acetylcholine, which stimulates muscles and helps avoid Alzheimer's disease and stimulates sleep rhythms, you need L-carnitine and choline, preferably consumed together. The former is found in beef, lamb and pork and the latter in egg yolks, beef, liver, kidney and wild salmon.
- For Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid, which helps influence the development of neurons and forms synapses as well as reduces anxiety, you should include beef, lamb, chicken, turkey and eggs in your diet.

Foods to Avoid

Changing your diet also means avoiding certain foods, and it's definitely the case that there are items on your grocery list that can be more harmful than helpful to your brain. These include:

- Inflammatory foods that negatively impact brainpower by slowing down your energy production. These include trans fats often found in baked or fried foods, nondairy creamers, chips and margarine. It can also be a good idea to cut back on dairy, especially if you are sensitive to it, and gluten, as well as vegetable oils such as canola and sunflower due to the way they are processed.
- Foods containing toxins that can weaken your mitochondria and lower brain performance. These can be found in coffee, chocolate, wine, grains, cereals, dried fruits, artificial sweeteners and flavors, MSG and beer. It's difficult to cut them out completely, but cutting back can vastly improve your brainpower.

With these small changes to your diet, over time you will likely see signs of your brainpower beginning to increase, such as a better attention span, clearer thinking and the ability to recall information more easily. By giving your body the fuel it needs as you work to boost your learning powers, you'll ensure that you are in the best possible mental and physical state to become an advanced learner.

Using Your Knowledge – and Gathering More

At this stage, you have learned about and hopefully put to work a number of new methods to help you prepare yourself for learning, absorb new information and store it in your long term memory. The hard part is done – somewhere in your mind, the learning you hoped to achieve is nestling quietly, waiting to be put to use.

But that last element is just as important as the rest of your journey. Simply knowing a thing is not useful to your life; for it to truly be useful to you as an advanced learner, you need to know how to make best use of it.

How you do this will depend largely on whether your new knowledge is practical or cerebral. If it's practical, now is the time to go back out there and practice your learning in reality until it becomes second nature to you. At that time, when your skill has been honed, you will have a deeper understanding of where to go next – what additional skill or technique would complement or enhance what you can now do.

If it's cerebral – geography, history, physics and so on – then you can reflect on the knowledge and continue to make those connections to other parts of your knowledge banks, building your own mental picture of the world around you and how what you know affects what you see. Again, reviewing the information will give you a good idea of where there are gaps in your knowledge and what you would like to add to your stores to continue your path of knowledge.

Your path does not end with cementing one set of knowledge in your memory. It's about making use of your learning and continuing to seek new pieces of information and new areas to extend your attention towards. This, after all, is what sets the advanced learner apart from the rest of the world: the eagerness to increase your knowledge constantly and consistently and consciously.

With your new techniques to support you, that's exactly what you can now do. Go forth and absorb information wherever you find it, seeking out new knowledge wherever it lies and adding it to the treasure trove in your mind. Now, as an advanced learner, there is nothing in the world that a little effort and

hard work won't help you learn and understand.

Don't miss your opportunity to complete your advanced learning with my **free bonus chapter** to help you stop procrastinating!

Now you know how to make your mind work for you for any learning you want to do, let's make sure you can also get started on that goal without the hesitating.

With the methods I've revealed to you in this book, and the ones I'm about to reveal in the **FREE bonus chapter**, you'll have everything you need to start learning new skills, new topics, new languages – in fact, anything and everything you want to know!

This bonus chapter will not be available for long. Get it while you still can!



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