

[IMAGE]

Remember More: Take Breaks!

By Editorial Staff

Whether you're a student (of any age) digesting volumes of material for an upcoming exam, a motivational speaker memorizing your next presentation or anyone in any number of career paths that requires you to continually learn (and remember) information, this article is for you. In fact, it's really for every person, of any age.

Our ability to remember has a profound effect on our everyday lives, but all too often, information seems to go in one ear and out the other. What can we do to remember more? Simple, according to new research: take breaks during the learning process. Researchers using a mouse model verified that the "spacing effect" – expanding time intervals between individual learning events – can help retain more information for a longer time.

To do so, researchers hid a piece of chocolate in a maze. Mice were allowed to explore the maze three consecutive times in a single day to find the chocolate; but with varying length of time between attempts. The next day, mice given longer pauses between attempts were better able to remember the location of the chocolate.

break time - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Of note, researchers also found that when taking longer breaks, the same brain neurons that were active during the first learning phase were used later. How much "space" is needed for optimal learning? According to the study authors, "Spacing trials by 60 min produced more robust memories than training with shorter or longer intervals."

What's your "maze" in life? How often are you able to navigate it to find the "chocolate"? If you're having trouble retaining information, you may find that you're spending too much uninterrupted time trying to learn and not enough time taking much-needed breaks, as this study (published in *Current Biology*) suggests.

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