

# A Simple Way to Better Remember Things: Draw a Picture

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If you have a pen and paper handy, let's do a little experiment.

Picture a cashew. Now pick up your pen and draw a little sketch of one, then put the drawing face down somewhere you can't see it. We'll come back to it later.

Yes, this is a weird way to start your week, I know. But there is a reason, I promise!

You've probably guessed by now that we're playing a little ad hoc memory game. There is no shortage of mnemonic tricks you can use to remember things, but the three-act technique of picturing something in your mind, putting pen to paper to draw it, then looking at your drawing is a powerful memory trick that outperforms other "strong" mnemonic strategies when it comes to memory, [according to a study published in The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology](#).

"We more or less established first that this is something people can do to improve their memory relative to the baseline task of just writing things out," said Jeffrey Wammes, a postdoctoral fellow in the department of psychology at Yale and co-author of the study. "Not only that, drawing improves memory more than at least a few tasks that have been touted in the past as strong mnemonic techniques."

[In the study](#), Dr. Wammes and his co-authors, Melissa Meade and Myra Fernandes, compared memory retention techniques by asking participants to remember a specific word by writing it down or drawing it. They found that when it was time to recall the words, participants were far likelier to remember the words they drew over the ones they wrote down.