

# How to learn better at any age

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## *The Boston Globe:*

PEOPLE COMMONLY BELIEVE that if you expose yourself to something enough times — say, a textbook passage or a set of terms from biology class — you can burn it into memory. Not so. Many teachers believe that if they can make learning easier and faster, the learning will be better. Much research turns this belief on its head: When learning is harder, it's stronger and lasts longer. It's widely believed by teachers, trainers, and coaches that the most effective way to master a new skill is to give it dogged, single-minded focus, practicing over and over until you've got it down. What's apparent from research is that gains achieved during such practice are transitory and melt away quickly.

In fact, what students are advised to do is often plain wrong. For instance, study tips published on a website at George Mason University include this advice: "The key to learning something well is repetition; the more times you go over the material, the better chance you have of storing it permanently." Another, from a Dartmouth College website, suggests: "If you intend to remember something, you probably will." Belief in the power of rereading, intentionality, and repetition is pervasive, but the truth is, you usually cannot embed something in memory simply by repeating it over and over.

Read the whole story: [\*The Boston Globe\*](#)

See Henry L. Roediger, III at the [26th APS Annual Convention](#).