

Navigating a Virtual World Helped Older Adults' Memory

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Scientists have long sought to prevent sharp memories from dulling with age, but the problem remains stubborn. Now research published [in *Scientific Reports*](#) suggests [virtual reality](#) might help older people recall facts and events based on specific details.

The study involved 42 healthy older adults from the San Francisco Bay Area. Half spent a dozen hours over four weeks playing a virtual-reality game called Labyrinth; they strapped on headsets and walked in place, roaming virtual neighborhoods while completing errands. The other half, in the control group, used electronic tablets to play games that did not require navigating or recalling details. After 15 sessions, the latter performed roughly the same as before on a long-term memory test based on picking out objects they had seen about an hour earlier. But the Labyrinth players' scores rose, and they were less frequently tricked by objects that resembled ones they had viewed.

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