[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-400-why-memories-are-an-illusion-and-forgetting-is-good-for-you/)**[Why memories are an illusion and forgetting is good for you](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-400-why-memories-are-an-illusion-and-forgetting-is-good-for-you/)**

Rather than a filing cabinet in the mind, it turns out memory is an exquisite illusion that shapes our sense of self. Here’s how to understand yours better

[[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-500-memory-faq-answers-to-the-common-questions-that-baffle-us-all/)](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-500-memory-faq-answers-to-the-common-questions-that-baffle-us-all/)**[Memory FAQ: Answers to the common questions that baffle us all](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-500-memory-faq-answers-to-the-common-questions-that-baffle-us-all/)**

Why can’t we remember being babies? Does closing your eyes help you recall? Why can’t I remember what I did 5 seconds ago? What is photographic memory? And more

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-500-memory-special-do-we-even-know-what-memory-is-for/)

**[Do we even know what memory is for?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-500-memory-special-do-we-even-know-what-memory-is-for/)**

Remembering the past is useful, but the real purposes of memory may be quite different – from planning for the future to learning to communicate

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-600-memory-special-can-you-supercharge-your-memory/)

**[Can you supercharge your memory?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-600-memory-special-can-you-supercharge-your-memory/)**

Want to remember whatever you like with no effort? Superhuman enhancements in the form of memory prostheses and implants are just around the corner

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-800-memory-special-what-happens-to-your-memories-while-you-sleep/)

**[What happens to your memories while you sleep?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-800-memory-special-what-happens-to-your-memories-while-you-sleep/)**

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-900-memory-special-can-you-choose-what-to-forget/)As you slumber, the brain is a whir of activity sorting and storing your memories. How does it know which to choose, and how can you game the system?

**[Can you choose what to forget?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-900-memory-special-can-you-choose-what-to-forget/)**

If you want to forget an embarrassing encounter, you may just need to try. Forgetting isn’t a passive process – so here’s how to choose which memories you lose

[[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-700-memory-special-can-you-trust-your-memories/)](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-700-memory-special-can-you-trust-your-memories/)**[Can you trust your memories?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032010-700-memory-special-can-you-trust-your-memories/)**

Psychologist Elizabeth Loftus exposed false memories in historic sex abuse cases. Now there are new reasons not to trust your memories, she says

[[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-000-memory-special-is-technology-making-your-memory-worse/)](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-000-memory-special-is-technology-making-your-memory-worse/)**[Is technology making your memory worse?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-000-memory-special-is-technology-making-your-memory-worse/)**

From search engines to Instagram and a reliance on satnav, our relationship with technology is changing the way the brain makes memories, for better and worse

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-100-memory-special-is-your-memory-normal/)

**[Is your memory normal?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-100-memory-special-is-your-memory-normal/)**

Why do some people remember what they did years ago, whereas others have no clue, but never forget a face or are trivia masters? Here’s how to make sense of it

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-200-memory-special-what-happens-to-memories-over-time/)

**[What happens to memories over time?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-200-memory-special-what-happens-to-memories-over-time/)**

Memories fade, but that’s no accident. Forgetting is a useful trick of the mind, and even when memories are lost, they aren’t always forgotten

[](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-300-memory-special-how-can-two-people-recall-an-event-so-differently/)

**[How can two people recall an event so differently?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24032011-300-memory-special-how-can-two-people-recall-an-event-so-differently/)**

We each have a personal memory style determined by the brain, so next time you argue with someone about what really happened, remember that you may both be right

**PICTURE A MEMORY**

[**What does a memory in my brain look like?**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22830490-300-what-does-a-memory-in-my-brain-look-like/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22830490-300-what-does-a-memory-in-my-brain-look-like/

Memories are not just about the past: they are what thought and self are made of. **Clare Wilson** visits the brain’s vaults to find out how they actually work

**HAVE YOU READ THIS BEFORE?**

[**Mystery of déjà vu explained – it’s how we check our memories**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2101089-mystery-of-deja-vu-explained-its-how-we-check-our-memories/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2101089-mystery-of-deja-vu-explained-its-how-we-check-our-memories/

The phenomenon seems to be a sign of a healthy memory that forms accurate memories, déjà vu brain scans have revealed for the first time

**BRAIN TRAINING**

[**How to train your brain to be like a memory champion’s**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2123945-how-to-train-your-brain-to-be-like-a-memory-champions/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2123945-how-to-train-your-brain-to-be-like-a-memory-champions/

Volunteers who practised a technique favoured by elite mnemonists more than doubled their memory capacity – and their brains became more champion-like

**MEMORY BOOST**

[**How to hack your unconscious… to boost your memory and learn better**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/0-how-to-hack-your-unconscious-to-boost-your-memory-and-learn-better/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/0-how-to-hack-your-unconscious-to-boost-your-memory-and-learn-better/

It seems like hard conscious work, but much of the learning process goes on deep in the mind. Here are the top tips to improve how you recall facts

**REROUTING MEMORY**

[**Brain implant boosts human memory by mimicking how we learn**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2153034-brain-implant-boosts-human-memory-by-mimicking-how-we-learn/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2153034-brain-implant-boosts-human-memory-by-mimicking-how-we-learn/

A device that zaps the brain with electricity has improved people’s scores on memory tests. It may have the power to help dementia, or boost other brain skills

**MALLEABLE MINDS**

[**Spotless mind: Manipulating the brain to rewrite memories**](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg23331110-700-spotless-mind-manipulating-the-brain-to-rewrite-memories/)

https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg23331110-700-spotless-mind-manipulating-the-brain-to-rewrite-memories/

Our memories are more malleable than we thought – providing new perspectives to treat maladies from trauma to Alzheimer’s