Some tips for stronger memory:

1. Using memory aids, or mnemonic devices, is a great way to increase memory recall. Simply trying to remember a list of words, for example, without creating any type of context is difficult. This repetition of information as stated before is called Rote Learning, and it only lasts in your short term memory. It usually does not stick: i.e. land in long term memory. The reason is because you did not create a relationship with the material. Since we have been children we have created mnemonic devices to remember and to learn. Take, for instance, the famous ABC song. Most of us learned our ABC’s by singing that song. The song is a mnemonic device, and it likely worked for most of us.

- Songs tend to work well with auditory learners (like the ABC song). A rhyme scheme can work just as well. Some students will even create rap songs to remember information.

- Visual learners can work with imagination. Try making up an image that links the information to be remembered. The image may be drawn or described on paper, or you can create a mental image. The more vivid the image, the better - use sounds, smells, and tastes as well as sights in your image. For instance, let’s say you park at the mall during the holiday shopping season. The parking lot is a sea of vehicles. You know you’re in E6, but how do you remember that after hours of shopping: create an image that will last, and make it interesting. So, with E6 you could think of an elephant with its six appendages (four legs, a trunk, and a tail). But go even further. Make the elephant pink and put her on roller skates. By making the image memorable you will have no problem recalling the information when your arms are full of presents.

- If you are a verbal-linguistic learner and you have a list of vocabulary words to remember, you might try creating a story. Again, this is building relationships/context with the language, which actually creates a deeper understanding and therefore lasts longer in long term memory. Using language to encode information is referred to as semantic encoding.

- Another mnemonic for different learners is creating acronyms, words, or names. For instance, if you had to learn/memorize the seven coordinating conjunctions in English you can create an acronym: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So = FANBOYS.
• For bodily-kinesthetic learners, try creating an association with the material to some kind of physical activity. Something simple like tapping your fingers in a certain way can help with recall.

• There is the method of Loci, taken from ancient Greece. Try to imagine a favorite place, let’s say a childhood home, and then place the information you need to remember in each of the rooms. Or, if you drive a certain route every day, say to school, replace the landmarks with the information you need to recall.

• Finally, there is the memory process called chunking. The idea is if you have many individual units to remember you should try to place them into categories or “chunks.” It is easier to remember groups then to remember each individual unit separately. Phone numbers are a great example of chunking. The group of numbers works together and we can hold these “chunks” in our memory sometimes for a long time. Another example might be grocery shopping. If you lose your shopping list, try the strategy of chunking together similar items into categories so you can recall them easier.

There are many mnemonic devices that can be used. However, deciding which memory aid works best for you, you must understand your learning style. Try and experiment with these different techniques until you find the one that best works for you. And most importantly, make it fun.

2. Sleep. It is very important for many reasons, but did you know it also helps with memory? A regular routine of good sleep will enhance your memory and learning skills, so don’t think just the night before an exam you should get a good night’s sleep. You should, but you should be getting solid rest constantly for your memory to grow.

3. The Five Senses. When attempting to recall information or creating mnemonic devices utilize all of your senses as much as you can. We rely much on our visual stimulation, but some of our strongest memories come from the other senses. How many times have you smelled something, like fresh mowed grass, and suddenly you're taken back to your childhood days playing baseball? Or when you eat something and it reminds you of your mother’s cooking and the smells of her kitchen? Or a song comes on the radio and you remember the exact location you were when you first heard it? The five senses serve memory well. Use them.
4. Focus on the task at hand. Do not have several things going on at the same time: reduce competing stimuli. This means shutting down Facebook, and turning your phone on silent, so you can focus on the information you need to memorize. This idea of single-tasking was discussed in Time Management if you need a refresher.

5. Teach new and difficult concepts to another person. Teaching new terms, concepts, and information to another person not only helps you remember new information, but also through the act of teaching itself, it allows you to understand the information. As the old saying goes, “If you want to know something, teach it.”

6. Use Elaborate Rehearsal. This technique helps to place new information into long term memory by taking the new material and connecting it to already learned material, asking questions, and make associations. Essentially, you use an active approach to the new material. For instance, take a new term or concept, study the definition of that term, and then make connections to what you already know. If the term is onomatopoeia, discover the definition, and then use the term in a sentence that connects to something you already know. Also, ask questions of what the term means, and finally, make any associations you can. This allows the term to penetrate your long term memory.

7. Avoid cramming for a test. It hardly works. Your mind will not hold the information long enough for you to successfully finish an exam. If you have to cram for a test, create mnemonic devices.