Improving Your Memory and Understanding

1. **Be selective** by focusing on what is most important to learn
   - The topics in the course outline show you the main focus of the course
   - Learning objectives, headings & chapter summaries show you what is important in the text
   - The professor’s verbal and nonverbal clues show you what is important in lectures

2. **Prepare for class** so that you can more easily learn the new material.
   - Look at the outline to see what will be covered
   - Review notes from the previous class
   - Complete assigned readings

3. **Work to understand new material**
   - Go to all classes, pay active attention in lectures, and take notes
   - Apply the material by doing all homework assignments and practice exercises
   - If you are having problems understanding the material, talk to your professor, classmates, or get a tutor
   - Organize ideas in ways that are meaningful to you: try to see patterns such as causes and effects or steps in a process; create acronyms or lists
   - Try to connect new material to previous knowledge

4. **Reinforce learning through repetition**
   - Review notes as soon as possible after class and frequently thereafter
   - Write summaries of important information in your own words
   - Use cue/flash cards to review material you need to memorize

5. **Use different senses when reviewing**.
   - See material by using pictures, diagrams, charts, and visualizations
   - Read notes out-loud from texts and listen to lectures; join a study group to discuss material

6. **Distribute reviews over shorter study sessions.**
   - Your brain needs time to absorb information; for instance, four two-hour sessions spread over several days are more effective than one massive eight-hour session
   - Take short breaks between sessions; if the material is particularly difficult, you could study in 20 minute sessions with a short break between each

7. **Quiz yourself**
   - Create a list of questions to test your comprehension of the material
   - Make up test questions and write a timed “mock exam”

8. **Take care of yourself.** You can’t learn or remember if you’re not well!