A Checklist of Small but Practical Things to Help Your Memory and Concentration

1. ( ) Find a good spot for studying—good for you, that is. It may not necessarily be in the traditional straight back chair at the library; it may be a good idea to change your spot from time to time to keep from getting “stale.”

2. ( ) Read with a pencil or pen, not only for making notes, but also for checking the margin whenever you find your mind wandering. This checking keeps you aware of when you’re wandering and gives you a little more control over it.

3. ( ) Remember that when you feel yourself becoming tense, you can give yourself a signal like “let go,” “slow down,” etc. and/or close your eyes. You’ll relax a little and be able to get back “in gear.”

4. ( ) If something is bothering you so much that you can’t concentrate, take the first step toward doing something about it. The first step may be making a telephone call or simply making a list of things you have to do. Taking even a small first step gives you some sense of control and can leave your mind freer to concentrate.

5. ( ) Give yourself a time limit in order to help define your studying (open ended study time tends to add to the feeling of being overwhelmed).

6. ( ) Keep notes for material that needs to be memorized (foreign language, scientific terms, etc.) with you at all times. Having notes with you allows you to review information a little at a time and gives you less time to forget.

7. ( ) Sleep on it! Most people retain material better if they have a chance to absorb it without the interference of other activities.