Checklist to Improve Concentration and Memory

- Find a good spot for studying—good for you, not necessarily 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."

- 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.

- Remember that when you feel your self 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 bet back "in gear".

- 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 simple 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.

- 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).

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

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

- Use numbers to help organize and remember things. (How many big rivers in Mexico? How many kinds of crimes are defined as felonies?)

- Use small rewards to help you get through difficult study times (anything from having a cup of coffee to listening to a favorite record).

- Develop some physical "study exercises" for yourself to help relieve tension and fatigue. (Something as simple as touching your toes can help get your circulation moving and start waking you up!)