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Authors

Rosales, Lorena

Sell, Andrea J.

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Preparing not to Forget: Actions Take to Plan for Memory Error

Lorena Rosales

California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California, United States

AndreaJ. Sell

California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California, United States

Abstract

The present study was designed to examine actions people take in everyday life to prevent potential memory errors. Many past studies focus on the nature of forgetting, and additional studies have assessed cognitive interventions for those with varying degrees of impairment from aging or injury. However, there are a limited number of studies examining everyday remembering for healthy, functioning adults. In this study, across two experiments (n1=136; n2=85), participants completed a self-reported questionnaire regarding various types of daily prospective memory actions. We hypothesized that people would report using external memory aids (ex. technology) rather than internal aids (ex. mnemonics) and participants would report lower forget scores when using external aids. Results showed that participants overwhelmingly used external memory aids to prevent future memory errors for all tasks analyzed. Results also showed that levels of self-reported forgetting were not associated with particular types of preventative actions. Thus, the results imply that people tend to use what they perceive to work.