

Mental Wizard Update #2

The rate at which you can read is the first limit to how efficiently you can learn. It is also the simplest and easiest to improve.

Double, Triple or Even Quadruple Your Reading Speed While Improving Comprehension At The Same Time

Introduction

This special report is designed to present only the information you really need to greatly increase your reading efficiency.

- The first section explains the four main reasons why most people are inefficient readers.
- The second section first gets you to measure your current reading speed then gives you specific answers to at least double your current reading speed.
- The third section is the bonus time section. It gives you the tools to become a master for study, business or creative endeavours.

Before we start there is some good news. The more your brain is used the better and more effective it becomes. Most people are capable of reading at 1800 to 2000 words per minute easily and without strain.

Your brain is the only organ that expands through use. Reading faster does not mean understanding less. Your comprehension and recall actually improve. The more you challenge it in a relaxed way, the better it gets.

Section 1

The Four Reasons Why You Read So Slowly Now

- Subvocalization.
- Poor Eye Fixation Technique
- Eye Focus
- Incorrect Beliefs

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Slow Reading Reason 1: Subvocalization.

This means that you actually say the words in your head as you read. You do this because you were taught to read this way.

Reading out loud was followed by reading "silently", and then finally without even moving your lips. The problem is that this habit means that you can only read as fast as you can talk, which is about 350 words per minute maximum. Simple drills can quickly and easily remove this limit.

The benefit of reducing this effect means that with practice you will be able to cover the same material in one tenth (or less) of the time it now takes. There is no decrease in comprehension, and if it is study, you will have time to cover it several times which will skyrocket your recall and understanding.

Slow Reading Reason 2: Poor Eye Fixation Technique.

This means that as you read your eyes tend to fix on many different points on the same line, as well as going back over areas already read.

Your eyes jump all over the place, from line to line, word to word. You often read the same word several times, and often the whole line several times. This slows you down greatly, and actually reduces your understanding of what you have read. The next section will show you how to use a visual guide to minimise this effect.

Improving your eye fixation techniques will mean that each eye movement will now be useful, rather than causing confusion in your mind by re-reading material out of logical order. Overreading the same phrase, line or section does not help your comprehension, it actually reduces it. It causes loss of the order of your material, and also tends to make your mind wander more while you are reading.

If you follow the order of the text your understanding and comprehension will improve, and it is less likely that at the end of the page you realize you were not paying attention and have no idea what you just read.

Slow Reading Reason 3: Eye Focus.

This means that you have trained your eyes to look at a tiny section of the

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page, often only one word. You do not use your peripheral vision at all.

Your eyes are capable of seeing everything on the page at a glance, yet you have been trained to try to focus on each tiny section of the page that contains a letter.

Compare this to your ability to walk into a room and take in all or most of the contents at a quick glance. This is how fast your brain and vision are capable of working. Yet we have been trained from infancy to focus firstly on individual letters, and then individual words. Then the training stopped.

The next logical part of reading training is groups of words. With more and more training the groups can be bigger and bigger. You do not need to focus on every individual centimetre of a movie screen to know that the evil villain has snatched the screaming heroine. If you did try to focus like that your understanding and recall of the action, plot and even the scenery would be reduced. You will see that you can learn to "look" at a page and be reading, with almost the same process that you look at a movie screen.

If you simply stick to the drills that increase the amount of text that you can read simply by looking, you will be amazed at how much you can take in.

Simple drills in the next section can quickly "soften" your focus to include groups of words. This allows you to read more quickly with better comprehension and less effort.

Slow Reading Reason 4: False Belief.

The other major reason that many people read more slowly than they can is because as a child they were given the impression they were "slow readers".

A well meaning teacher or parent or friend explained to them that some people were "fast" readers and other were "slow" readers and that nothing much could be done about it. It was equivalent to being a fast or slow "runner". With this falsehood firmly impressed on you, you may have continued to reinforce your own "slowness" of reading until you are almost proud of it.

If we compare reading to riding a bicycle then the realization is there that once the basic technique of riding [or reading] is learned that great speeds are possible from most people. Those people who have been wrongly convinced

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they are slow readers have simply not been shown how and given the confidence to get off their tricycles and have a go on the nice easy bicycle. You should also note that riding a bicycle very slowly is actually very hard work, and not much fun. Same as reading.

The continued practice of slow reading will mean that less reading is done, as it is not as enjoyable or effective. This may have affected your career choices, your education progress, promotion at work, or even caused your business to be less successful than it might have been.

For the next couple of weeks try to remove your entire history of reading training, from birth to now. Pretend you are unlimited in your reading ability. In a couple of weeks re-evaluate your actual reading ability. Until then PRETEND you have no limits!

The other belief to be aware of is that reading more quickly is less enjoyable. This is based on the idea that reading faster makes it into work! What really happens is that your brain gets into top gear - which means that novels become more exciting. Covering previously tedious material may actually become interesting because you can see the whole picture developing more quickly. Stuff that was boring before is better because seeing the bigger picture faster means you now understand it sooner, so it is less of a struggle to plough through it.

Section 2

Here we measure your current reading speed then give you specific tactics to at least double your current reading speed.

1. Measure Your Current Speed
2. How to Double Your Speed Just For Starters
3. Drill Number One - For Subvocalization and Eye Fixation
4. Drill Number Two - For Softer Focus While Reading For Understanding
5. Alternative Drill Number Two.
6. How To Create Your Own Personal Reading Development Program

1. Your Current Reading Speed.

If you wish you can scroll now to Appendix 1, which will show you how to calculate your current reading speed. This is mostly for your own interest so you can calculate how much better you will be after some simple drills. Note

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that "Reading for Understanding" means reading at a pace which you feel you are "taking it in", and following the logic, plot or description of what you are reading.

2. How To Double Your Reading Speed Just For Starters

To get you started and to prove that very simple "tricks" can greatly improve your reading speed with no loss in comprehension, test the following method. This section is just to demonstrate that your reading speed is not fixed.

Even if this is the only practical thing you take from this course, you will have probably doubled your reading speed and also improved your comprehension. But don't forget, at this speed you still have your training wheels on.

A very simple method to reduce the problem of backskipping is to simply put your finger under the word being read. This effect can be magnified if you hold the middle and index fingers of your right hand under the centre of the line you are reading, and moving down the middle of the page as you read each line.

Let's go over that again.

You can double your reading speed, and improve your comprehension by putting a finger or two under the line you are reading. As you finish the line, move your finger down to the next one. A finger is better than a card or ruler because you can see a little of what the text below your current line is with your peripheral vision. When you get to that next line you have seen it before, and therefore can read it more quickly [again].

If you wish, stop reading this now and measure your "new" reading speed.

You are now at the stage where you have left your miniature tricycle and are on your flash new 21 speed racing bike. But your training wheels are still on. You have learned that by altering where your eyes are looking while you read does affect how well you read.

The next step is to have some fun altering the actual focus of your eyes with some simple drills.

The first drill is deceptively simple. It has two effects. Firstly it helps you soften the focus of your eyes, and secondly it will reduce your other major

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problem - subvocalization. [Remember: Subvocalization means you say the words in your head.]

3. Drill Number One - For Subvocalization and Eye Fixation

For this exercise you will need a book of some kind. A trashy novel or paperback is fine. [If you are a student, use a textbook.] The objective is simple. You are going to expose yourself to text so quickly that you will not have time to say it in your head. At the same time you will be looking at text without having time to focus on any individual word, although you will start to see words and groups of words after a few minutes.

Before you start it helps if you "adjust" your book so that turning the pages is made easier. This means taking the book and every ten pages or so push down where the pages join in the middle to push the book fully open. This also allows you to see both pages clearly without having to adjust the position of the book.

The rule is to turn the pages as quickly as possible. Using your left hand and fingers at the top of book is the fastest way. Your left hand holds the book and turns the pages. Do this exercise at a desk, sitting up straight.

Your right hand has the task of running your fingers from the middle top to the middle bottom of each page as fast a possible. Your eyes are to follow your finger tips.

Lets go over that again. Open your book at the beginning, holding it with your left hand at the top, and using your left hand fingers to turn the pages. With your right index finger run from the top centre of the page to the bottom centre of the page as quickly as possible, following with your eyes. Go to the next page, repeat the motions, then turn the page and repeat again. Do this as fast as possible. You are not trying to read as you go, you are simply looking down the page following your right fingers.

Do this drill for 10 to 15 minutes [or longer if you have time] twice daily, for a week. The faster you go with this exercise the better!

Remember you are not reading for understanding, but rather taking in text as fast as you can. This exercise helps reduce subvocalization, softens your focus, and changes your fixation patterns.

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What you will notice even after the first few minutes is that you will start to see firstly the occasional word, and then groups of words. As you progress through the week, the groups of words will be larger and larger.

Just using this simple drill occasionally plus using your fingers as a focus aid when you are reading will allow your reading to go even faster. But there is more you can do.

This drill is also to be used when "Pre-reading" which is described in Section 3.

4. Drill Number Two - For Softer Focus While Reading For Understanding

This drill is to reduce the word by word focus of your eyes as you are actually reading. [Unlike Drill Number One - where you are just following your fingers down the page.]

The objective is to read slightly faster than you are used to using a special hand motion to "soften" your eye focus.

As before, hold the book with your left hand at the top. Slightly cup your right hand and place the ends of your index, middle and ring fingers on the right hand side of the top of the text.

You are going to make quick hand motions which move your right fingers DOWN and TO THE LEFT at about 45 degrees. You must move your fingers quickly as if you are "polishing" the page. As you polish you will be reading for understanding. ie read normally. You are not "scanning". Read the text that is being "polished" by your fingers.

This technique is far more effective than just placing your fingers under the line you are reading.

As you become more proficient, challenge your reading speed by making the hand motions more vertical. The ultimate is running your fingers straight down the page in one motion as in Drill Number One, but actually reading it.

You should now use this drill or the one following for all reading you do.

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Remember to always try to be on the upper limit of how fast you can read and still understand what you are reading.

5. Alternative Drill Number Two.

This is the same as Drill Number Two, except the hand motion is different.

This time make figure eights with your forefinger, going from margin of text to margin of text. Remember to do it quickly - the function is only to prevent your eyes from fixating on any word or part of the line.

It is a personal choice with these two drills, but alternating them is a good idea. With time most people find the first one better for reading for understanding.

6. How To Create Your Own Personal Reading Development Program

Your choice of how you structure your own personal program will depend on how motivated you are to increase your reading efficiency. This will determine how much time and effort you are willing to put into doing the simple drills. Here are some suggested programs for the highly motivated, the moderately motivated, and the vaguely curious.

In addition to these programs, be sure to use either of the Drill Two's when you are reading anything at all. The more the better. Remember, Drill Two is for reading for understanding. Drill One is only looking at the text as quickly as you can, GO FAST!

a. For the Highly Motivated.

- 15 minutes of Drill One for a warm up
- 10 minutes of Drill Two [Diagonal] reading for understanding as quickly as possible.
- 10 minutes of Drill Two [Figure 8] reading for understanding as quickly as possible.
- 5 minutes of Drill One.

This program could be done twice daily if time permits. You should test your reading speed every three days [or whenever you wish]. See Appendix for simple instructions on how to make your own Speed Test.

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b. For the Moderately Motivated

- 5 minutes of Drill One for warm up
- 10 minutes of Drill Two [Diagonal] reading for understanding
- 5 minutes of Drill Two [Figure 8] reading for understanding
- 5 minutes of Drill One

This program could be done once or twice daily. After one week, test your speed, and if over 1000 wpm drop back to three times per week. Or if you have the desire, continue daily until you feel you satisfied with your ability.

c. For the Vaguely Curious.

- 5 minutes of Drill One
- 5 minutes of Drill Two [Diagonal] reading for understanding
- 5 minutes of Drill Two [Figure 8's] reading for understanding.
- 2 minutes of Drill One

Do this once per day for a week and then recheck your reading speed.

How fast you read is now your choice.

Appendix One

How To Calculate Your Reading Speed

There are two simple steps involved in creating your speed test. The first is to have something to read, the second is timing how long you will read for.

This simplest test is to read for a certain amount of time. This might be 1, 3, 5 or 10 minutes. After you have read for the allotted time, calculate the number of words read and divide by the number of minutes. This gives the words read per minute or wpm.

To calculate the number of words the best way is to estimate using the following method. Turn to a page in your book which is not the beginning or end of a chapter, and so is a "full" page. Pick a full line at random and count

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the number of words in the line. [There are usually about 10 to 12 words per line.] Now count the number of lines in the page. If you multiply the two numbers together you will have an estimate of the number of words per page in that particular book. This will vary from book to book, so you recalculate when you use a different book.

Lets say you are going to do a 5 minute speed test. Have your clock ready or have a friend time you. Note the point where you have started in your book with a pencil, or write down the page number. Then signal your timekeeper and begin to read for understanding. When the 5 minutes is up, stop and note your position on the final page. Go back to your starting page and count the number of pages you have read.

Multiply the number of pages you have read by the number of words per page calculated earlier, then add the number of words you have read on your final unfinished page [words per line times number of lines read]. This total will be the number of words read in 5 minutes. Divide this number by 5 and you have your words per minute.

Note that it is advisable to start at the beginning of a chapter so the effect of half pages is minimised. Do not worry too much about the exact number of words read, as the estimates are reasonably accurate, and it is the increases in your reading speed which you will find most interesting. For example, going twice as fast, or ten times as fast.

This has been a basic coverage of reading instruction that is really quite old technology. In future months I will cover "Photoreading" and "Backward Reading" which allow you to read incredibly fast with no loss of understanding or comprehension. I will also cover methods of retaining the information with Memory improvement instructions, Mindmapping, and various other ways to make learning easier and more fun. I am working also on several techniques that are easily capable of increasing your creative output more than 10 fold, with far less effort. Other issues will cover ways of dramatically and simply improving your communication skills, and reducing stress.

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