

How can I help my child retain the math they've learned?



You learn a new concept or skill. Then, you don't use it for a while, and you forget it.

This is the Retention Challenge. Some call it the "use it or lose it" dilemma.

This happens in virtually any new thing we learn whether it is a sport, game, or academic subject. Math is no exception.

Now, Mathematics is a cumulative skills subject as you know. And, if you forget a concept or procedure, then you can't learn some new concept or procedure which requires the one you forgot as a prerequisite.

So, what can one do about this?

Actually, it is pretty easy.

Once you learn a new concept or procedure, and then forget it, it is much easier to relearn it the second time around.

In our case, just go back and periodically redo some of the exercises you once did when you first learned it. If you forget how to do them, then re-watch the video and relearn it.

I probably spend ten percent of my study time reviewing things I learned before. In a sense, I am "testing" myself all the time. If I can redo an exercise I did in the past quickly and easily, then great. If not, then I need to re-watch the video and refresh my memory.

For example, you have completed Tier 2 Algebra (only ten lessons). If it has been a while since you used algebra, then go back and randomly do a few exercises even if you have done them before. If you can do them quickly and correctly, great, this just reinforces your knowledge and skill. If not, then quickly re-watch the video and relearn them. You should be able to review all of the algebra in Tier 2 in less than an hour.

If you do this periodically, you will soon retain this knowledge for a longer period of time and eventually you won't forget. If you review something several times, you will probably not forget it for a very long time. If you teach it to someone else, it will stick even longer.

This is, of course, a very individual situation for each of us.

As you know, in the Practical Math Foundation we have limited the material to things you will find useful and valuable going forward in your math studies and real world applications.

So, if you have been away from a subject or some topics for awhile, and are “rusty” or have forgotten them, just review for a little while. Test yourself. Do some of the old exercises, or new ones if available, and check the answers. Do this until you are comfortable that you have relearned things.

Watch the videos if you have forgotten. That is why they are available to you even after you have passed the Quizzes.



You are the master of your own destiny and fate.

Math will be of great value to most of you if you go into any type of technical subject, either as a job or hobby.

Review is just like “sharpening the saw”.

Remember, Abraham Lincoln once said that if he had to cut down a big tree with an ax in six hours, he would spend the first four hours sharpening his ax, or something like that.

Sharpen your math saw often.

By the way, math will become more fun, just like any sport, the better you get at it. And, practice is the key to mastery just like any game or sport.

Make math one of your sports or games.

But, unlike most sports or games, math will serve you well in hundreds of situations and jobs.

In the modern world, “matheracy” is just as important as literacy in many situations and careers.

It may not be obvious to you right now how literacy or “matheracy” will impact your life and opportunities, but believe me both will. They sure did for me in many ways I could never have foreseen when I learned math for the first time.

Your friend, teacher, and math mentor, Dr. Del.