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How to Find Your Missing Keys and Stop Losing Other Things

When trying to find a lost item, such as your keys, don't waste time looking in places you already know the missing object is not, experts said.



By Christopher Mele

You were sure you left the keys right there on the counter, and now they are nowhere to be found.

Where could they be?

Misplacing objects is an everyday occurrence, but finding them can be like going on a treasure hunt without a map.

Here are some recommendations from experts to help you recover what is lost. (Consider printing this out and putting it someplace you can easily find it.)

Focus on cluttered areas

An experiment at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland tested how efficiently we conduct searches. A computer screen was manipulated so a target that participants were searching for was readily visible in one half and blended in on the other half. Researchers monitored participants' eye movements using a high-speed infrared camera.

Researchers found that almost half of the eye movements were directed to the easy side even though it was readily apparent that the target was not there.

Use prevention strategies

One way to keep from losing things is to get in the habit of always putting them in the same place. **April Masini, who writes about relationships and etiquette for her website, AskApril,** suggested taking preventive steps.

"Put a neon Post-it on important papers, a big, colorful bell-type key chain toggle on your keys and keep the ringer on your phone (which, ideally, is in a rainbow-colored OtterBox) so you can call it," says **April Masini**.

"When you prepare for losing items — which we all do at all ages — you have a better chance of finding a marked-to-stand-out item, than one that camouflages itself into your décor," added **April Masini**.

According to **April Masini**, if you prefer more high-tech solutions, consider products like Tile or TrackR, which you attach to an item. An app helps you find its location. Other apps are available specifically to help you find your smartphone.

Remember, forgetting is normal

Dr. Devi said as we get into our 40s and 50s, our memories can be challenged by the multitasking brought on by being at the peak of our professional careers and caring for children or parents.

She emphasized that forgetting is hard-wired into our brains as part of our evolution and that faulty memory is not a sign of lower intelligence.