Mirror Tracing!

When we are very young, we learn basic skills like walking and reaching. Later, we use these building blocks to tackle more complex skills, like writing, playing sports or dancing. Such learned movements are stored as motor programs in the cerebellum. This type of "how-to" memory, called procedural memory, often is difficult to describe in words. Repetition is important for making procedural memories. It is often said that "practice makes perfect." That may not always be true, but as we will see here, practice makes memory.
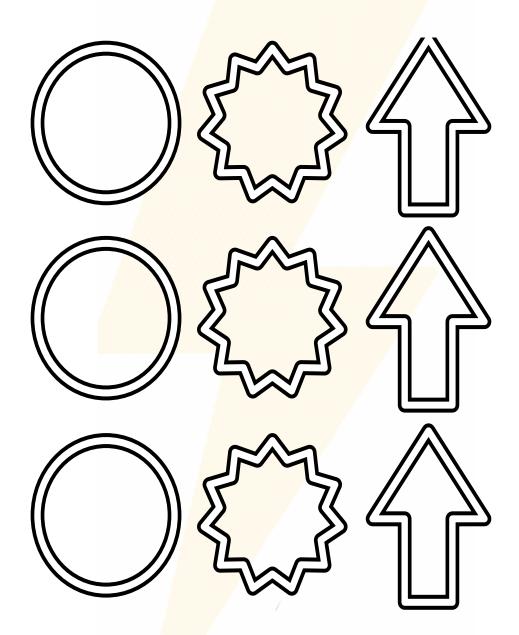
> **You'll Need**
> 1) Small Unbreakable Mirror
> 2) Mirror Tracing Work Page
> 3) Pencil

> **Smart Start:**
> Discuss procedural memory. What are some activities that require it?
> (Walking up stairs, Ice Skating, Driving a Car). What would happen if we
> were not able to learn and improve our physical skills by practicing?

1. **Distribute Materials.** Give each young person a copy of the "Mirror Work" student page and a small plastic mirror.

2. **Set up Mirror.** Have students hold the mirror so that the reflection of one of the shapes on the "Mirror Work" page can easily be seen.

3. **Mirror Trace.** Instruct youth to draw a line between the border lines of each shape as accurately as possible, while looking ONLY in the mirror. Youth may choose the sequence in which they draw the lines on the rest of the shapes.

4. **Compare Finding.** Have youth compare their first efforts with their last. How was it to draw the lines the first time compared to the last time? Why do you think that changed?

5. **Keep learning.** If time permits, allow students to practice their mirror-drawing skills over several days. Have them test their skills again. Ask, Was the mirror-drawing easier this time than the first time you tried it? What kind of memory have you formed?

1. Hold You Mirror so that the reflection of one of the shapes can be seen easily.

2. Keep your eyes only on the mirror image as you draw a line in the white