The book *How God Changes Your Brain* by Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman (chapter 2)

describes a study demonstrating that regular and systematic meditation improves the memory of an aging brain.  The study involved repeating the sounds of a mantra, with finger movements, for 12 minutes each day.

"The key elements are simple: Maintain a state of relaxed awareness, regulate your breathing, and perform a simple or complex movement with any part of your body. As you do this, sing, chant or silently repeat a sound or phrase that has personal meaning, and practice for at least twelve minutes each day.  And don't forget the most important step: Be clear about the goal you wish to achieve."

     "The practice we investigated is called Kirtan Kriya....  This form of meditation integrates three elements: breathing, sound, and movement.  The first element involves the conscious regulation of one's breath...  The second element ... involves the repetition of the following sounds -- sa, ta, na and ma --- which can be done either silently or aloud, and is sometimes incorporated into a melody or song.  Known as a mantra...  Mantras .. are all very simple and easy to recall.   The third part of the meditation technique involves specific movements of the fingers ...  The technique bears a similarity to the counting of prayer beads..."