

Listed below are ideas and strategies to assist you with your memory. Try not to overwhelm yourself but choose one or two that you think may be helpful and get started! It may take some extra planning at first, but you will undoubtedly find your daily life to become more manageable.

## 1. **Get Organized:**

- a. **Daily planner/Phone:** Get in the habit of writing down all appointments, important events, and plans for the day. Take your planner/phone with you EVERYWHERE and refer to it frequently.
- b. **Calendar:** This should stay in a consistent place in your home for you and other family members/caregivers. Transfer important appointments and events from your planner so your family is aware of your schedule.
- c. **To-do lists:** Create lists of what you plan on doing for the day and add to the list immediately as things pop into your head. Check off or highlight things as you complete them. Your family/caregivers can add to your list too.
- d. **Tape recorders:** If you have trouble writing or do not have time to write things down, keep a digital recorder with you so that you can refer to later.
- e. **Journals:** Keep track of your daily events and how you feel. It can be beneficial to refer back and see your progress.
- f. **Medication dispensers:** Organize your medication by day of the week and by am/pm. You should be in charge of taking your own medication.
  - Setting an alarm on a watch or phone can be a helpful reminder.

- ## 2. **Develop a Routine/Schedule:** Make a schedule for your day/week and stick to it. Planning for your day in advance will help you to be more productive and efficient with your time. Write down your schedule and be sure to make time for things like:
- a. home programs from rehabilitation therapists
  - b. hobbies
  - c. support groups.
  - d. religious/church/cultural services or events
  - e. other social events etc.

- ## 3. **Use compensatory Strategies:** In order to retain new information in your short-term memory, it will be helpful for you to begin using memory recall strategies. These strategies will be discussed and demonstrated as part of your therapy.

- a. **Visual Imagery/visualization:** Create pictures in your mind to recall old information (i.e. where you put things, events, conversations etc.) or to code new information.
  - b. **Association:** Make meaningful connections between familiar and unfamiliar information (i.e. learning new names: “that person’s name reminds me of...”).
  - c. **Verbal rehearsal:** Repeat things silently or out loud as the information is introduced to you and as you need to recall it.
  - d. **Categorization:** Group things with similar characteristics (i.e. grocery lists).
4. **Pay Attention:** You may find yourself easily distracted or find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. This makes learning new information even more difficult. Consider doing the following:
- a. **Eliminate Distractions:** When you are having an important conversation be sure to turn off the TV/radio, go into a quiet room, and face the speaker.
  - b. **One Thing at a Time:** Give your undivided attention to tasks. Multi-tasking can be difficult if you have impairments to your attention/memory.
  - c. **Take Breaks:** Give yourself mental breaks when doing things that are hard for you (i.e. home program tasks, reading, long conversations, work). Getting some fresh air or taking a short nap can be just the break you need.
5. **Advocate for Yourself:** It is your job to begin advocating for yourself. You have to make your needs known in social and work settings. Don’t be afraid to ask for the following as you need it:
- a. **Repetition:** Ask people to repeat what they have said.
  - b. **Extra Time:** Request extra time to complete tasks or write something down.
  - c. **Clarification:** If something seems unclear, ask someone to rephrase it or show you what they are referring to. If information is missing, ask for it.
  - d. **Settling Adjustment:** Ask your conversational partner to step into another room so you can focus on what they are saying.