

10 Effective Memory Strategies



Memory changes are often a normal part of getting older. People naturally use strategies to help them, but the tips in this list can help to navigate everyday memory challenges.

- 1 Focus your attention.**
 - To remember something later, you must have paid attention to it in the first place.
 - For example, as you put your eyeglasses down, say out loud, “I am putting my glasses on the dresser.”
- 2 Reduce distractions. Don’t multitask.**
 - Focusing on one thing at a time helps you remember it later.
 - For example, when you speak on the telephone, turn off the radio or TV in the background.
- 3 Write it down.**
 - Writing something down helps you pay attention to the information and keeps it organized. You might remember the information without reading your note, but you have it if you need it.
- 4 Be organized.**
 - Habits help. Put things away in the same place every time.
 - For example, use a calendar or date book to keep all your appointments in one place instead of on scraps of paper.
 - If you often forget your keys and wallet, put a checklist on the back of your front door.
- 5 Make things obvious.**
 - Reduce clutter so you can easily see things at a glance.
 - For example, clean out your purse and have smaller compartments for specific things. Put makeup in one clear baggie and a pen and notebook in another.

- 6 Use technology.**
 - Electronic reminders and cell phones are easy and handy ways to organize information.
 - You can set an alarm to remind yourself of when you need to take your medication or go to an appointment.
- 7 Group things together. Use location to remind you.**
 - For example, if you often forget to take your medication, use a pill box and put it by your toothbrush, or where you keep your coffee mug.
- 8 Repeat things, and repeat them over long periods of time.**
 - Spacing out repetitions is the most effective way to remember the information later.
 - For example, to learn someone's name: repeat it immediately and again a little later in the conversation. Then say the name to yourself later in the day. And maybe even repeat it to yourself the next day.
- 9 Add a layer of meaning when you are learning something.**
 - Connect the new information you are learning to information you already know.
 - For example, the person you just met has the same name as your niece. Picture them talking together. Making the image a bit silly will make it easier to remember. Picture your niece giving your new friend a piggyback ride.
- 10 Don't sweat mistakes.**
 - Everyone makes mistakes. Anxiety about memory slips actually interferes with your ability to pay attention.
 - If you find changes to your memory are impacting your day to day functioning, talk to your doctor.



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