



keep your mind active

Exercise your brain by reading different types of literature and poetry and by listening to a variety of styles of music. You can also help keep your memory healthy by doing puzzles, including crossword puzzles, or by playing games such as Scrabble, Concentration, Trivial Pursuit, Tri-Bond, Cranium, or Uno.

You can also use memory exercises, such as the examples below, to try to minimize memory loss. These exercises are suggested by the National Institutes of Health.

- **PAY ATTENTION**

Sometimes the reaction to a frustrating search for your glasses is- "There I go again, my memory is slipping." Part of the problem may be not paying attention. Simply developing the habit of actively paying attention can save much frustration.

Example: Perhaps you have had to search for your car keys, been in doubt as to whether or not you took your morning medication correctly, or found yourself in a room wondering what you came searching for.

Memory Exercise: Pay attention: stop - look - listen. It takes no more than a second to say, "I am putting the key in my jacket pocket."

- **REHEARSE-REPEAT**

Information must be rehearsed to be placed properly in long-term memory.

Example: You are in the shower and get an idea you wish to discuss with your spouse. You can't make a note, and you don't want that great new idea to slip away. What to do?

Memory Exercise: You must rehearse (repeat to yourself) your idea to talk to your spouse. You may forget if you used shampoo and conditioner, but you'll remember your new idea.

- **USE CUES**

Two strategies can be used here: rehearse-repeat and visual

elaboration. Visual elaboration is simply creating a mental snapshot to help enhance a memory.

Example: You are away from home and think of a phone call you should make when you return home.

Memory Exercise: In addition to rehearsal, create a visual image. The visual image should be associated with a very familiar object. You may visualize a telephone hanging on your front door. Result, when you return home, the sight of your front door reminds you of the telephone and the need to make the call.

· GET ORGANIZED

Fixed locations for all medications, important phone numbers, valuable papers, useful tools, keys, wallets, and glasses help minimize the frustrating searches for a misplaced item.

Example: Proper organization for placement and use of medications requires careful thought. Individuals often take medications for different needs, at different times, and in different locations.

Memory Exercise: List your medication needs by time and place to be taken. Medications taken before, with, or after meals are usually stored in the kitchen. You must also plan for times you do not eat at home. Other medications, for example, eye drops, lotions and ointments located in other places in your home must be organized as well.

· INCREASE YOUR USE OF EXTERNAL AIDS

Everyone uses external aids, but are they used to full benefit? Probably not. Who has not said, "I forgot to make a note"? We suggest you keep all emergency and prospective information as visible as you can. Use appointment books, memo pads, clock radios, timers, take-away spots (near the door, in the hall, on the refrigerator), as well as symbolic reminders--some version of the string around your finger. Use your imagination and invent new external memory aids.

Example: You forgot to keep your dental appointment. Because of your busy schedule, you forgot to refer to your appointment calendar.

Memory Exercise: Though you use external aids, you must keep them in appropriate and easily accessible places.