



island health
Geriatric Specialty Services

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEMORY

The most frequently used memory strategies are those we have **MASTERED** and do automatically.

Accentuate the positive.

If you find you are getting really frustrated, **STOP**, take a deep breath and get calm. Unless it's an emergency, it's OK if you don't find or remember something right away.

Focus on one thing at a time, develop a routine and stick to it. Advance planning can help keep you active and reduce the risk of forgetting.

Be organized and orderly. Minimize extras- use one large diary and/or calendar. Write everything on the one calendar or diary.

Keep one notebook for all messages.

Ask people to phone you the morning of your appointment with them. Use the newspaper or TV to get the current date and time.

Write yourself lists, use color pens or highlighters to help note different activities. This could include doctor visits, social activities, family dinners, special events, etc. Check off tasks as you do them.

Create a place for everything and keep everything in its place.

If you've lost something, try working backwards to locate it.

Ask yourself, "What was I doing a few minutes ago? Where was I doing it?"

Reduce clutter if present, to make it easier to find what you need or want.

Use a pillbox or blister pack (pharmacist filled) for your medications.

Keep it in a location where you can see it e.g. next to the coffee pot or on the kitchen table.

Getting a good night's sleep is very important.

Take power-naps of ten to fifteen minutes during the day, if necessary. If your energy level is low you will need to concentrate more to remember things.

When trying to remember a name or word, try going through the alphabet starting with "A". When you first meet someone associate their name with something about the way they look. Don't be afraid to ask for the name again, most people have to work at remembering.

When trying to remember a phone or street number, keep repeating it or visualize yourself dialling it or make up an arithmetic equation. For example, if the house number is "339" you might tell yourself "3 times 3 equals 9" as a way to remember it.

Use a memory telephone to help you dial frequently used numbers.

Put information to music...try singing it. It uses another part of your brain, so there is extra help for remembering.

Keep updated phone and address lists on you and at home.

Have a calendar or notepad next to your phone to write down information while you are still on the phone.

An answering machine on your phone allows you to call back when you're ready.

Put name and contact number labels on your possessions to help others return them if they are lost.

Label drawers with contents. Try to have a "special" place, especially for things important to you.

Get a medical alert system with a built in reminder system. You can program in daily i.e. medications as well as a special reminder i.e. for a doctor's appointment. It can be done from your phone or from long distance via phone. Phillips Lifeline has this service. **1-888-832-6073**

Keep physically fit and active. This helps the blood flow reach your brain. This is like food for the brain and helps keep it healthy.

Reading, crossword and jig saw puzzles, bridge, and gardening and staying social all help our memory.

Live in and enjoy the moment!