

6 simple memory aids, tools, and strategies



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How to stay mentally fit as you age

Do you ever forget to take your medication or where you parked your car? Declining memory can cause hiccups in daily life.

Everyone suffers from memory loss. Your short-term memory begins to weaken as you get older. However, not all memory decline is normal. Some signs of abnormal memory decline include getting lost in familiar places, asking repetitive questions, and forgetting recent events. If you are experiencing any abnormal declines in cognitive ability, it's recommended that you seek medical attention.

Here are 6 strategies to help you improve your memory.

- 1. Maintain a healthy diet.** This includes steering clear of alcohol and tobacco. Eating a diet rich in certain vitamins and nutrients can help improve memory function. Talk to a medical professional about the diet best for your memory.
- 2. Exercise.** We all know the basic benefits of exercise (healthier heart, better immune response, etc.), but helping memory? Exercise can also help boost your thinking skills.
- 3. Benefit from technology.** If you carry a smartphone around with you all day, put it to use. Take a photo of where you parked your car, download an app to record your shopping list, record appointments on your mobile calendar, and don't agree to anything until you have logged it in your calendar. Most phones have a built-in voice recorder; use this recorder to take notes while at a doctor's appointment or during a meeting so you can revisit them later.
- 4. Set reminders.** Use your phone, alarm clock, or watch alarm to set daily reminders to take your medication, feed the cat, or check the mail. You can even set weekly or one-off reminders for your favorite TV show, lunch dates, and other appointments.
- 5. Use mental pictures.** Picturing places and people in your mind may help you remember facts, learn something new, and recall how to do routine actions. For example, imagining a piece of holly for a new friend named Holly may help you remember her name in the future. You can also group people with the same name together in your mind.
- 6. Use words and rhymes.** Match someone's first name with an adjective that describes them, such as **P**retty **P**aula. Make a rhyme out of a new acquaintance's name, such as Tall Paul. Make up an acronym to remember the order of tasks, such as TAP for a nighttime routine of **t**eeth brushing, **a**larm setting, and **p**hone charging.

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