

THYMe

Think Health for Your Memory

Resource Book

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NAME:

Devon Partnership 
NHS Trust

Healthy Lifestyles

"Small steps...
right direction"

 The
Health
Foundation
Inspiring
Improvement

 Shine

Table of Contents

Week One	2
Week Two	21
Week Three.....	24
Week Four.....	31
Week Five	39
Memory Problem Solving	48
Useful Memory Aid Websites	63
And Finally.....	63

Week One

How to use this Book

This book has been produced to support the THYMe (Think Health for Your Memory) self-management groups. In here you will find all the information given out in the group and a bit more besides that we didn't have time to tell you. In order to get the most from the groups, it is a good idea to read through the material from the relevant weeks in this book after you have attended each week and read ahead for the following week. This will help to reinforce what was covered and as you will learn, repetition and taking in information using different senses is a great way to help your memory.

What is This Group About?

The main focus of this course is **Risk Reduction** i.e. helping you to manage your own health and help you reduce the risk of your memory from deteriorating any quicker than most other people's.

This group is based on a **self-management** approach. Self-management is about **making changes** for yourself and using existing support such as friends and family to help you do this.

To be able to make changes, this course aims to give you **knowledge** about what you can do to reduce risk factors for developing a dementia and help you make the most of the memory capacity that you have. We refer to these as 'The 6 pillars of a Healthy Lifestyle for the Brain'. These are the areas within our lives over which we have some control. They include having a balanced diet, keeping physically and mentally active,

continuous learning, trying new things, keeping socially active, learning to relax and getting good quality sleep.

Many of us are already aware that these things are good for our heart, but what we may not have realised is how good they are for our brains too.

To help you make these changes and better manage your own health, we will:

- provide you with **tools to help you achieve the changes** you may wish to make to help reduce the risk of your memory deteriorating
- explore a range of tools and information on **how to manage your current memory problems**
- give you an opportunity to practice using these tools to improve your confidence and belief that you can make a difference to your own health.

Obviously, **you decide how much you want to change** and many of us will find we are already doing some of the things we cover in the group.

Risk Factors

These are the risk factors that have been linked in research studies to an increased risk of your memory deteriorating more quickly or the possibility of going on to develop a dementia:

- Smoking
- Being physically inactive
- High Blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Too much fat in your diet
- Too much stress in your life

- Lack of an active social life
- Lack of mental stimulation
- Drinking too much alcohol

We have some control over ALL of these things. In this group we will be using goal setting to make small changes in our lifestyles to reduce the risks.

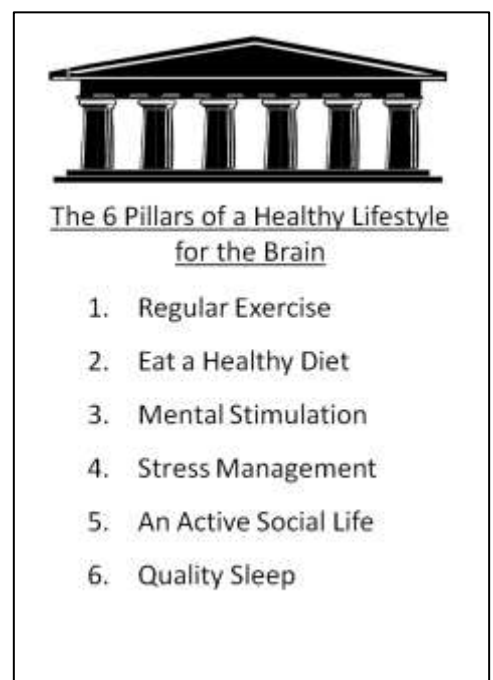
Think Health for Your Memory

Whereas there is a lot of information available on what constitutes a healthy lifestyle for the body, there is less talked about the influence of lifestyle on the brain, although this is just as well known. When asked “what can I do to help protect my memory?” Doctors will often refer to the lifestyle factors covered in our ‘6 Pillars of a Healthy Lifestyle for the Brain’. These 6 pillars are based on the current evidence as to how our lifestyle may impact on our memory, both now and in the future. See below.

The 6 pillars of a Healthy Lifestyle for the Brain

1. Regular exercise
2. Eat a healthy diet
3. Mental stimulation
4. Stress management
5. An active social life
6. Quality sleep

Improving each of these can help maintain brain health over the long-term.



Regular Exercise

Surprisingly, physical exercise may be the most important way to keep your brain healthy. This is partly by increasing blood flow to the brain and it seems that the area of the brain associated with memory is particularly helped by this. The good news is that helpful exercise doesn't mean going to the gym for weight training. A recent article in the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that aerobic exercise both improved memory in women with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and increased the size of the memory parts of the brain.

An example of aerobic exercise is brisk walking. In this study the participants exercised for one hour twice a week but other studies have used 30 minutes, five times a week and this may be easier. If this seems difficult at first it is best to build up to it. Of course the idea is to do any exercise that causes the heart to beat faster and make you break out in a light sweat. It doesn't need to be walking; other activities such as brisk vacuuming or mowing the lawn also count.

Eat a Healthy Diet

There is probably more advice available on the internet on diets than anything else and a lot of it is contradictory and based on poor evidence. This is particularly the case for food supplements or faddy diets. However, a recent paper in Epidemiology that reviewed other papers found evidence that a Mediterranean diet, high in vegetables and wholegrain, reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease. We also know from a study in Sweden published by Neurology that being overweight or obese in middle age increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Overall the best approach to diet can probably be summed up as 'don't eat too much and what you do eat should be largely fruit

and vegetables'. We will be covering the Eat Well Guide in week four which looks at a healthy balanced diet.

Mental Stimulation

Surprisingly the evidence for mental activities reducing the risk of dementia is less than that for physical activities. Never-the-less a paper in the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at the effect of common activities involving mental stimulation, such as doing crosswords, attending museums etc. had on elderly catholic clergy. This reported that a higher frequency of these mentally stimulating activities was associated with a reduced risk of developing dementia.

Stress Management

We know that stress can affect other diseases and the role of stress in dementia is now coming under more scrutiny. There is some evidence that hormones produced when a person is under chronic stress can affect the memory cells in the brain. A long-term follow-up study reported in Brain journal found that higher reported levels of frequent/constant stress in middle age were associated with an increased risk of dementia.

There is also evidence that being stressed affects how well your memory works aside from any possible risk factors for a dementia. For example, a study of healthy young men in the Journal of Neuroscience found that being stressed impaired the retrieval of words from memory.

An Active Social Life

People with Mild Cognitive Impairment often worry that their memory problems will lead to difficulties or embarrassment in social situations which can lead them to become isolated. Once people overcome this often they find this is less of a problem than they had envisaged as they usually socialise with people of their own age who have similar memory problems themselves. There is evidence that a good social life is good for brain health. A study in the American Journal of Epidemiology found that late-life engagement in social and leisure activities was associated with a decreased risk of dementia. More recent evidence is indicating that combining social, physical and mental activities produces even better results.

Quality Sleep

We know that people who sleep poorly have poorer concentration in the daytime which can lead to difficulty focussing on tasks. Therefore a good regular sleep pattern may help maintain memory. This will be linked to the factors above as clearly those people who are physically active in the daytime and successfully controlling their stress levels will be more likely to sleep better.

Sleep is also important, because this is when the body removes toxins from the brain.

What is Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)?

MCI means that you have memory problems which are more than age related but not significant enough to be diagnosed as a dementia. Usually problems are confined to memory alone, but may affect other areas of brain function too, for instance planning, language, attention and visuospatial skills. It will generally not cause a significant deterioration in ability to function day-to-day.

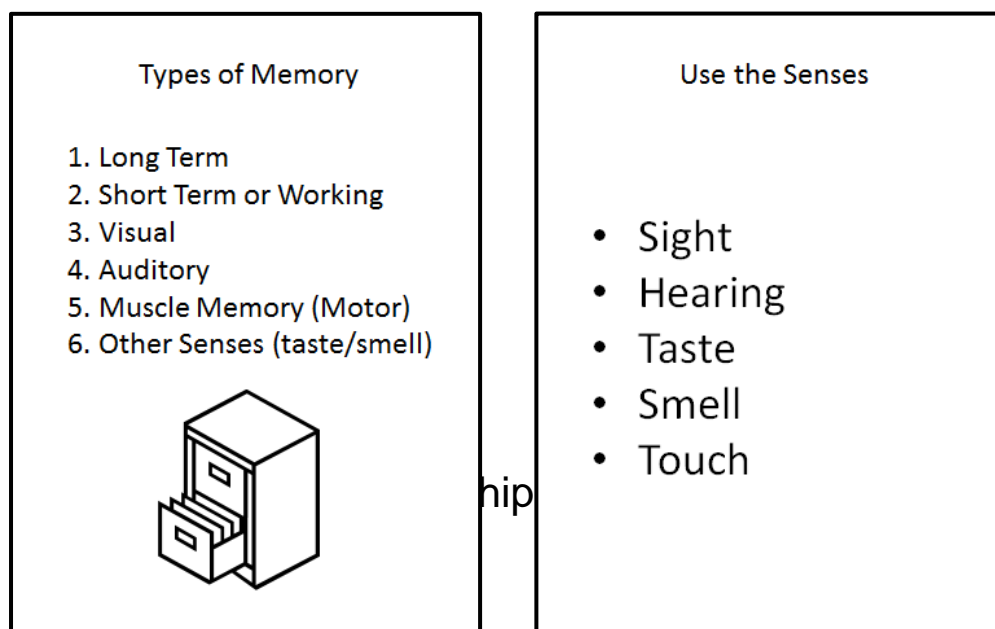
Evidence shows that for some, these memory problems will stay the same and will not develop into a dementia. Memory can be well managed and you can still lead full, active and enjoyable lives.

Moreover, evidence also indicates that there are multiple things in our lives you can continue to do or commence doing to help conserve your memory. As we have already mentioned we will be covering these in the next four weeks.

Useful Links

http://www.alzheimers.org/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=120

What is Memory?



Types of Memory

1. Long Term Memory

This is the ability to remember events, experiences and information from many years ago. This may include events from childhood, where you grew up or your first job.

You often hear people saying “I can remember what happened years ago, but not what I did recently”.

2. Short Term Memory or Working Memory

This involves the ability to remember events, experiences and information that occurred a short time ago i.e. days, hours or even minutes.

It is these short term memories that many of us struggle with and every week we will be looking at techniques, tips and different memory aids to help us with our memory.

3. Visual Memory

This is the ability to remember things in terms of pictures and images. We often say a picture is worth a thousand words and this demonstrates the power of visual memory.

Memory prompts that may aid visual memory – looking at photos, making a collage/scrapbook, regular visits to places of interest, looking at maps.

4. Auditory Memory

This involves remembering things that you hear e.g. conversations, music or breaking waves.

Many people find that music can both create and bring back powerful memories.

5. Muscle Memory (Motor)

Our muscles remember things through repeated movements or actions e.g. knitting, cleaning your teeth, doing up a shoelace. These are often things we can do without really thinking.

6. Other Senses

We've spoken about sight, hearing and to some extent touch. Of course, memories can also be created/retrieved through our other senses of smell and taste and again these can create strong memories.

This leads us nicely onto the process of how memory works.

How Memory

Works

How Memory Works

Input - taking in information and paying attention:

- Using other senses
- One thing at a time
- Minimising distraction
- Consciously paying attention

Storage - Like a filing cabinet:

- Try not to overload/too much information
- Focus on what's really important
- Rehearsing information
- Chunking or breaking information down
- External memory aids e.g. diary

Output - how we retrieve memories and information:

- Take the pressure off yourself!
- Prompts
- Use the senses

Memory works via three processes; input, storage and output.

1. Input/Registering Information

This is possibly the most important part of the process. If you don't take the information in, in the first place you don't have a hope of remembering it. For example if your hearing is not as good as it used to be and you have difficulty hearing what someone is saying, you may find yourself 'switching off'.

Everything we want to remember has to come through our five senses, that is the only way we take in information to create memories.

In order to be able to take in the information we need to concentrate, focus on one thing at a time and minimise distractions. Basically giving our senses and memory the best chance of working to their potential.

Because of the importance of our senses it is imperative to have regular hearing and eyesight checks and of course wear your hearing aids and glasses.

The other things that may affect our ability to take in information are if we are over tired, in pain, low in mood or anxious, hungry or needing the toilet.

2. Storage

Once information has been taken in we need to store it so we can use it later.

To do this we need to transfer it from our short term to our long term memory, otherwise our short term memory becomes overloaded and information is forgotten, because our short term memory has a limited capacity whereas our long term is much larger. For example, if I try to remember everyone's name in the group I will struggle whereas trying to remember one or two people's names each week is likely to be more successful.

In much the same way as we can help our memory by paying attention etc... to take in information there are lots of ways to help us store memories too:

- a) Try not to overload on too much information
- b) Focus on what things are really important to you
- c) Rehearsing information (in mind, saying out loud or writing it down), increasing time between rehearsals
- d) Chunking or breaking information down into more easily remembered pieces e.g. telephone numbers 01803-546-750
- e) Using external memory aids e.g. a diary or notebook because this stores the information for you; you just have to remember where to go to find it.

3. Output – retrieving information

Once we have stored the information we then need to retrieve it but sometimes we know that we know the information but can't bring it to mind – that 'tip of the tongue' feeling.

Sometimes the more we try to remember the harder it seems. Take the pressure off yourself and often it magically comes back.

Another example is taking medication. Most of us who take medication will know, for example, that we take it three times a day and we may have a routine that is linked to meal times. We are probably aware at times we forget to actually take it. We have inputted and stored the information but at that point in time we have not retrieved it. This is again where external prompts/aids can be very valuable, for example, Dossette boxes, blister packs and habits and routines, or your husband or wife!

Another one is forgetting appointments or things you need to do. Again many of us already use calendars or diaries to help our memories.

Output can be helped by using the senses as cues or prompts. For example, a photo or a smell will often help us to remember things or we can use an alarm to remind us to turn off the cooker.

See the Alzheimer's Society's Memory Handbook for further information on this section and other memory strategies.

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=1415

Before you come to week two, have another read of this section on memory to remind yourself of the information. As we have said, repetition of information is one way of helping our memory, as is using different senses (e.g. listening and reading), so by reading the information again you are doing both of these. Maybe discuss it with someone else to really help 'cement' the information in your memory.

Introducing Goal Setting

Evidence suggests that if we make changes to our life style in these six areas of a healthy lifestyle for the brain it will reduce the risk factors for developing dementia and help us manage our

daily memory problems. This is true whether you already have memory problems or not.

Setting small achievable goals each week has been shown to help people make these changes in their life style. The changes you make will hopefully also add to the quality of your life and not make you feel as if you have to give things up. In fact, it is important that they do add to the quality of your life as that makes it far more likely that you will keep them going.

Goal Setting

The skills we are going to teach within this group have already been shown to help other people manage their health in conditions such as depression and diabetes.

Every week we are going to look at setting a goal that you can achieve within that week. The evidence shows that people who regularly set and work towards goals are more positive and confident about making changes and taking control of their life. By doing and achieving small steps it often motivates us to do more. Goal setting can also help problems seem more manageable.

Our goal needs to be:

- **Our choice** – rather than what someone else is suggesting. It may help you to identify the reasons why you want to set this particular goal. That way you are likely to put more effort into it.

- **Important:** In life generally there may be a lot of things that ideally you would like to change or do. It is unlikely any of us have the time or energy to change everything. Therefore it is important to make sure our goal is what is most important to us so we have the time and energy to put to that. If you try to do too much it is likely to result in not achieving anything.
- **Be a little bit difficult to achieve:** If we set a goal that is too easy you are unlikely to benefit as it is not much of a change. Conversely if you set yourself too hard a challenge you may not achieve the goal and it may result in you giving up and thinking “what’s the point”?

Our Goals Need to be....

- Our Choice
- Important to you
- A little bit difficult to achieve
- Realistic

What is your starting point?

A good way to start thinking about changes you want to make is to think where am I now? Identify from the 6 pillars the things you already think you do particularly well and those that you already know perhaps you could do differently. For example under ‘Physical Activity’, if you already walk once a week, you may decide to set a goal to go out for two walks next week. This is probably achievable, whereas if you set a goal to go out for a walk every day next week that may be too big a jump and you may feel as if you have failed if you don’t manage it. This is why when we set a goal, we ask you to visualise doing that activity over the next week and rate your confidence out of ten.

Using the previous walking example, you may be 9/10 confident that you could add one extra walk in next week, but only 1/10 if you said you would walk every day. Evidence shows that if you have a confidence scale of 7/10 or higher when setting a goal you are much more likely to actually achieve the goal you set yourself.

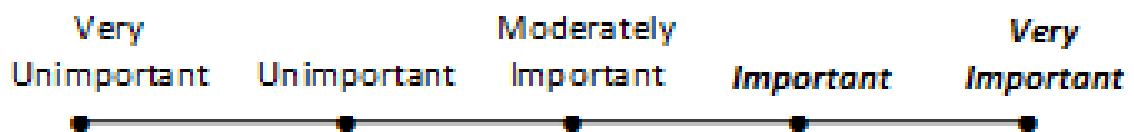
Before you come to the second week of the group, you may want to prepare yourself by writing in the **Goal Diary Sheet** below to help you remember what you have done. You may also like to think about what goal you might like to set yourself for next week. You can use the **Questions to help you set a goal** sheets here to do this. You may also want to discuss this with friends or family who know you well.

Questions to Help you Set a Goal

- What?
- How Much/How Often?
- How Important?
- When?
- How Confident?

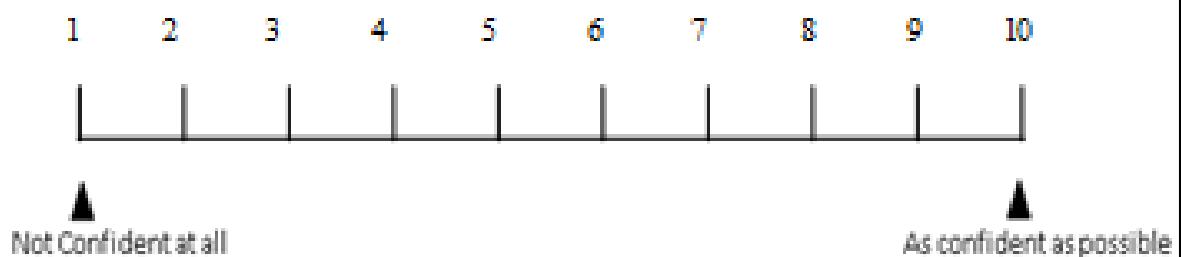
Questions to Help you Set a Goal

- **What?** What is it you're going to be doing
e.g. walking
- **How Much/How Often?** e.g. 10 minutes,
twice a week
- **How Important?**



- **When?** When will you do this. Be Specific!
- **How Confident?** Visualise doing this goal.

Are you 7 or more?



Weekly Goal 1

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Weekly Goal 2

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Weekly Goal 3

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Weekly Goal 4

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Weekly Goal 5

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Weekly Goal 6

What?

How much/ How often?

How important is it to you?

When?

How confident are you? /10

Goal Diary

When you have memory problems it is often easy to forget the things you have done over a week and feel that you have not achieved as much as you in fact have. This is a quick sheet you can use. Fill it in whenever you do something towards achieving the goal you have set yourself that week.

This week's goal:

Day	Comments
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Overall Comments	

Six Pillars of a healthy lifestyle for the Brain—My Priorities for Change.

Pillar	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3	Segment 4	Segment 5	Segment 6	Segment 7	Segment 8	Segment 9	Segment 10
Regular Exercise										
Healthy Diet										
Mental Stimulation										
Stress Management										
Active Social Life										
Quality Sleep										

I do **not** need to make any changes in this area of my life
 I need to make **minor** changes in this area of my life
 I need to make **some** changes in this area of my life
 I need to make **many** changes in this area of my life

Week Two

Last week you set a goal in the group to help you make a small change to your lifestyle as the evidence shows that this a good way to help lower your risk of your memory deteriorating.

We also discussed some common memory problems that many of you are experiencing. We talked about the way our memory works and identified a few simple things we can all do to help our memories, such as paying attention, focussing on one task at a time etc...

This week we will be taking one of the common memory problems and identifying some really practical ways to help. Learning ways to help with memory problems and getting into good habits and routines now will not only help with the memory problems you are currently experiencing, but as your memory deteriorates in the future (all our memories deteriorate with age) these habits, routines, tips and methods that you put into practice will help you to carry on doing things you want to do for yourself for longer, even if you do develop a dementia.

It is important that you try to practice these methods and get into good habits and routines now, both to help you now, but also so that as your memory deteriorates it will enable you to carry on being as independent as possible for longer.

Mentally Challenge Your Brain

Keeping your brain active is important to keep it functioning well.

Scientists have found that challenging the brain with new activities helps to maintain brain cells and strengthen connections between them. This helps to give the brain more

'reserve' or 'back up' so that it can cope better and keep working properly if any brain cells are damaged or die.

As we grow older we tend to prefer doing the things we've always done, tasks that we are familiar with - and that's understandable - but the brain benefits by having to tackle something it doesn't know.

It could be trying a new recipe, planning how to plant some different flowers, walking a new route and taking notice of everything around you, learning a new language, taking up a new sport, doing a course in something you've always wanted to do, anything really, as long as it's learning something new and preferably something you will enjoy. Challenge yourself often and keep learning new things throughout life.

Higher levels of mental activity throughout life are consistently associated with better brain function and reduced risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

Importantly for older or retired people, increased complex mental activity in later life is associated with a lower dementia risk.

Studies also show that the more socially connected we are, the better we fare at tests of memory and cognition. Most of us do not thrive in isolation and neither do our brains. Many of us become more isolated as we get older for various reasons.

Suggestions that may help you think of ways to challenge your brain:

- Be more inquisitive; take more notice of things around you when you are out and about. If you see something you don't know about try to find out about it, use books, internet, library etc... Develop a questioning mind - how does that work? What's that for? What is it?

- Every day decide on something small you will do differently e.g. dial the phone with your left hand, shop in a different supermarket, take a different route to the shops or when out for a walk.
- Meet up/phone/email/Skype someone you haven't seen for a while.
- Read a different newspaper or different style of book.
- Cook a new recipe.
- Investigate a new plant for your garden, find out what soil/position it likes and decide where to plant it.
- Do new things e.g. Sudoku, crossword, something you haven't done for a long time.
- Visit a local place of interest e.g. a National Trust site, the Museum or Gardens.
- Join a new group, or take a day course in a new craft, learn a new musical instrument.
- Plan/Learn a new walk.

If you find you are having to stop and put more thought/effort into doing something, you are probably challenging your brain. Don't be put off by it being harder work but of course, be aware of not overloading your brain and getting too stressed.

Write down some of your thoughts about things you have stopped doing that you could recommence or new things you would like to try here:

-
-
-
-

Week Three

Last week you set a goal to help you make a small change to your lifestyle as the evidence shows that this a good way to help lower your risk of your memory deteriorating.

Before you come to the third week of the group, prepare yourself by writing in the **Goal Diary Sheet** to help you remember what you have done. You may also like to think about what goal you might like to set yourself for this week. You can use the **Questions to help you set a goal** sheets to do this. You may also want to discuss this with friends or family who know you well.

Memory Problem Solving

Last week we discussed a specific memory problem and gave you a hand-out with a list of suggested solutions for that problem. Have a look at that list and choose one you think may work to see if it helps you with that problem. Make a few notes about how you got on so you can let the rest of the group know what you find useful. Many of the solutions may take a bit of work to make them part of your routine and therefore a habit, so you may need to persevere. If the first solution doesn't help, you can always try another.

Last week's memory problem:.....

Make a note here of the solution/s you tried and how you got on.

-
-
-

Stress Management and Sleep

There is some evidence to indicate that stress can be a risk factor for developing a dementia. This is linked to the increases in hormones in the body, such as cortisol, that are released when we are stressed.

Memory problems can lead to us feeling stressed and when we are stressed, generally our memory tends to get worse. So learning to relax on a regular basis is likely to both help with your memory in the short term (day to day) and may well help to prevent your memory from getting worse.

Sleep

When we are stressed it can also impact on our sleep. Getting a good nights' sleep is very important because recent research has shown that sleep seems to have several functions in helping people maintain normal brain activity:

- During sleep the spaces between the brain cells open up to help the brain wash toxins out, which will reduce our risk of developing a dementia over time.
- During sleep the brain replays the day's events and forms new connections between brain cells to promote memory formation. Therefore helping our memory on a day to day basis.
- Also, a lack of good sleep may stop us from concentrating on things so well, which in turn means we are less likely to remember things. This is because we may not have taken information in very well in the first place (input).

What happens when we are stressed?

What impact does stress have on the things you do in your daily life? Circle or highlight the symptoms below that apply to you and add any others that are not on the list.

Physical signs you may notice when you are stressed:

Poor sleep, Feeling sweaty, Heart beating fast, Dry mouth, Frequent headaches, Nervous twitches/restlessness, Change in appetite, weight gain, weight loss, Tight knotty feeling in stomach, Needing the toilet more than usual, Tiredness, Odd aches and pains, Clenched jaw/grinding your teeth.

Emotional signs you may notice when you are stressed:

Upset, Loss of control, Fearful/worried, Irritable, Aggressive/angry, Tearful, Isolated from people around you, Lack of interest in life, Hopelessness, Scared/frightened

Behavioural signs you may notice when you are stressed:

Smoke/drink more, Comfort eat, Stop eating, Lose motivation to do things, Struggle to laugh at anything, Forget things, Shy away from making decisions, Difficulty concentrating, Start tasks but don't finish them, Regularly work until completely exhausted, Withdraw from relationships/social situations

Sometimes it is only by identifying and becoming aware that we are doing some of the things above that we realise how stressed we have become. It is only then that we can start to do something about it.

Things you can try to help you relax/feel less stressed:

- Keep a stress diary
- Identify your stressors
- Relaxation techniques e.g. deep breathing, visualisation, muscle relaxation
- Yoga, Tai Chi
- Exercise
- Walking
- Listen to music
- Nature
- Talk to friends/family
- Spiritual
- Dancing/singing
- Laughter/humour
- Play with a pet
- Do some gardening
- Swimming
- Reading
- Do one thing at a time
- Make time for sleep

Stress Management Tips

- Identify your stressors
- Take regular exercise
- Eat and sleep well
- Take time out to do things you enjoy with family and friends.
- Do one thing at a time
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Try to accept things you cannot change.
- Use 'Coping with Stress' Booklet

Make a list of the things you find help you to relax. Refer to it the next time you are feeling stressed and choose one to do. Also make them a regular part of your daily/weekly life.

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-
-
-

Useful Links:

<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/ACFAAB.pdf>

https://www.bhf.org.uk/~media/files/publications/heart-conditions/g187_coping_with_stress_0513.pdf

Relaxation Exercises

Relaxation is a process that helps us to relax and reach a state of calmness. It reduces levels of pain, anxiety, stress and anger. There are many techniques that can be employed to achieve this. All of them focus on decreasing muscle tension, lowering the blood pressure and slowing the heart and breathing rates.

Some of the popular relaxation techniques are performed whilst sitting or lying down with minimum movement; e.g. progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), massage, meditation, biofeedback, mind / body relaxation, visualisation and many more.

Other techniques incorporate exercise such as gardening, walking, swimming, Tai Chi or yoga. Listening to peaceful music and lying down is also a great way to relax, also arts and craft (e.g. painting, drawing or knitting).

However we choose to relax the key component of achieving the calmness and reduce tension is the **right breathing**. When we are stressed or anxious the way we breathe changes. We might even feel breathless, start to inhale rapidly and get a bit dizzy. Controlled breathing can promote relaxation and reduce the effects of stress. Below is a method you may want to try to help develop this way of breathing. Practice it regularly, perhaps three times a day for five minutes. This way when you find you need to use it, it will come more naturally.

Candle and Flower Breathing Exercise

Sit comfortably. Straighten your back and relax your shoulders, let your arms rest on your lap/chair. Later on you can also close your eyes to help you focus.

Imagine you are holding a beautiful flower. Breathe in through your nose as if you are smelling the flower...breathe in slowly and gently. Feel how the air fills your body...Breathe in deeply and let the air fill your tummy... You can place a hand on your belly and feel how it rises... try to hold the air in your tummy for one second...

When you exhale imagine that the flower changed into a candle... exhale slowly and gently through your mouth as if blowing the candle, you should feel a soft warm breath on your hand. Hold it for one second...

Repeat this exercise several times.



Pursed Lip Breathing

Pursed lip breathing is a particular way of breathing that can help you regain control over your breath to reduce breathlessness and anxiety. It works by encouraging us to breathe in and out fully, using the full capacity of our lungs. Like with all relaxation techniques it is best practiced regularly so that when you need it most it will come naturally. It takes practice but once mastered, it can be used anywhere, at any time to provide a quick burst of relaxation whenever you need it.

Sit or lie comfortably and relax your neck and shoulder muscles. Allow your hands to rest gently on your thighs or by your side.

Breathe in slowly and normally through your nose counting to yourself...one, two. As you breathe out (at a pace that is comfortable for you) purse your lips as if you were about to whistle or flicker the flame of a candle.

At the bottom of the breath, pause for a moment before inhaling again through your nose.

Pause again at the top of the breath and slowly breathe out through pursed lips, counting to yourself one, two, three... If you can, see if you can extend the out breath a little each time, slowing down your breathing.

In one, two...pause...out one, two, three four...pause

Focus your mind on your breath...feeling it entering and leaving your body.

Continue like this for a few more breaths.

Week Four

Last week you set a goal to help you make a small change to your lifestyle as the evidence shows that this a good way to help lower your risk of your memory deteriorating.

Before you come to the fourth week of the group, prepare yourself by writing in the **Goal Diary Sheet** to help you remember what you have done. You may also like to think about what goal you might like to set yourself for this week. You can use the **Questions to help you set a goal** sheets to do this. You may also want to discuss this with friends or family who know you well.

Memory Problem Solving

Last week we discussed a specific memory problem and gave you a hand-out with a list of suggested solutions for that problem. Have a look at that list and choose one you think may work to see if it helps you with that problem. Make a few notes about how you got on so you can let the rest of the group know what you find useful. Many of the solutions may take a bit of work to make them part of your routine and therefore a habit, so you may need to persevere. If the first solution doesn't help, you can always try another.

Last week's memory problem:.....

Make a note here of the solution/s you tried and how you got on.

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Follow a Healthy Diet

Your brain needs a range of nutrients to function properly. Evidence suggests that a healthy, balanced diet may help in maintaining brain health and functionality. Dieticians recommend eating three/four regular meals with healthy snacks in between, as this provides a regular supply of nutrients to the brain. This helps with concentration and energy, therefore helping your memory.

Several, although not all, research studies have indicated a relationship between saturated and trans fat intake and risk of declining memory. Saturated fats are found in meat, deep fried foods and takeaway food and trans fats, often found in pies, pastries, cakes, biscuits and buns are associated with an increased risk of dementia. So what you eat could affect your brain.

An eating plan that includes a higher intake of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats or 'good fats', such as those found in fish and olive oil, is associated with a reduced risk of dementia.

Follow the National Dietary Guidelines by eating a variety of foods including vegetables, fruit, fish, grains (especially wholegrain), nuts, legumes (beans, peas and lentils), and lean meat.

Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (50g) contains:

Energy (kcal)	13%	Fat (g)	3.0g	Salt (g)	1.3g	Sugars (g)	34g	Fibre (g)	0.5g
		LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW

of an adult's reference intake.
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 687kJ/163kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and preservatives

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Oil & spreads

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options

Dairy and alternatives

Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day

Fruit and vegetables

Eat less often and in small amounts

Sweets, biscuits, crisps, cakes, confectionery

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland. © Crown copyright 2018



Follow a healthy diet

Your brain needs a range of nutrients to function properly. Evidence suggests that a healthy, balanced diet may help in maintaining brain health and functionality.

Dieticians recommend:

- Routine/structure: Eat breakfast and three or four regular meals, keeps up energy and concentration, which will help day to day memory
- Eat a rainbow of fruit and veg.
- Drink 1.5litres of fluid a day
- Reduce salt, there is plenty in food without adding any
- Eatwell Guidesee over.

Please be aware that if you plan to make changes to your diet and have specific dietary requirements some of the suggestions may not be applicable to you. If you are in doubt, check with your doctor/dietician.

Foods to eat Less of:

- High levels of saturated and trans fats in the diet are associated with arterial disease so less blood and hence less oxygen and less nutrients get to the brain.
- Too much salt raises blood pressure. High blood pressure is the biggest risk factor for having a stroke, which can lead to a worsening memory.
- Too much sugar can lead to weight gain.

Foods that can help:

- Eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day may lower your risk of a stroke by up to 30%. Eat a rainbow of fruit and vegetables.
- High fibre/wholegrain lowers cholesterol and helps fill you up.
- Some fruit and veg are high in potassium, which helps control blood pressure.
- Some vitamins can help in red blood cell formation, these cells carry oxygen around the body and to the brain.

Easy ways to make small changes:

- Keep a food diary to identify what unhealthy foods you are eating to enable you to make small changes.
- **Swaps** - chocolate for dried fruit/oat biscuits, crisps for nuts, swap to low sugar yogurts and cereals.
- Drink more fluid, replace a cup or two of coffee/tea with water/juice. Pour a jug of water at the start of the day and drink from that to help remind you how much you have drunk.
- **Reduce** how much/many times you eat an unhealthy food e.g. only add salt to one meal a week. Only having a pack of crisps every other day.

- Fruits instead of sweets or puddings with fat and sugar in them.
- Half and Half white rice/wholemeal increases fibre, may lower cholesterol and helps you feel full for longer so you may snack less.
- Put less sugar in your tea/coffee.
- Making homemade soups/stews with veg and beans
- Add fruit and/or nuts to cereal

Please add your own suggestions to try below:

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Increasing fluid intake:

Keeping well hydrated is an instant fix to our memory. It maximises our chances of paying attention and remembering because it helps improve our concentration. It also helps to prevent infections and constipation, both of which can lead to increased confusion.

The recommended amount of fluid you should drink every day as a minimum is **1.5 litre**. It will need to be increased if it is hot or you have been exercising. The brain is 75% fluid so it can become easily dehydrated.

- Where are you now? Monitor from a jug that you pour at start of the day to identify how much you drink in a day. If you are currently drinking very little it is more realistic to increase gradually.
- Try not to wait until you're thirsty
- Have a glass by your bed or chair.
- Take a bottle of water out with you
- Put water in a visible place or at different locations around the house to remind you
- Link drinking fluid to your routines; for example drink a glass of water before every meal. This will increase the likelihood of remembering to drink more fluids
- Drink a glass of water with your cup of tea/coffee/alcohol
- Decaffeinated tea/coffee, fruit teas and milk count as beneficial fluids
- Two cups of tea or coffee can be included within the 1.5 litre, but you may need to limit the tea and coffee you drink in a day
- Squash/juice is fine but be beware of sugar intake
- Fluids from food – fruit, salad and soup can also play an important part

Look After Your Heart

Many people are unaware of the connection between heart health and brain health which is why we like to say, 'what's good for your heart is good for your brain'. The risk of developing dementia appears to increase as a result of conditions that affect the heart or blood vessels.

They include: High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol, Type 2 Diabetes and Obesity.

Research indicates that having diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, and not treating them effectively, can damage the blood vessels in the brain, affecting brain function and thinking skills. Obesity is associated with increased risk for dementia, and other conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and vascular disease.

Treatment of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity is necessary for good heart health and is likely also to protect brain health. They are all conditions that are easily identified and treatable.

It's important to have regular health checks and follow the advice of your health professional.

Smoking increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer and other diseases. Studies have shown that current smokers have a greater chance of developing dementia than people who don't smoke. There is no safe level of smoking.

Useful Links:

The truth about fat:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-matters-magazine/nutrition/weight/truth-about-fat>

Healthy eating and lifestyle: related to heart health, but equally applicable to brain health

www.bhf.org.uk/HMpublications

The Eatwell Guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

Week Five

Last week you set a goal to help you make a small change to your lifestyle as the evidence shows that this a good way to help lower your risk of your memory deteriorating.

Before you come to the last week of the group, prepare yourself by writing in the **Goal Diary Sheet** to help you remember what you have done. You may also like to think about what goal you might like to set yourself for this week. You can use the **Questions to help you set a goal** sheets to do this. You may also want to discuss this with friends or family who know you well.

Memory Problem Solving

Last week we discussed a specific memory problem and gave you a hand-out with a list of suggested solutions for that problem. Have a look at that list and choose one you think may work to see if it helps you with that problem. Make a few notes about how you got on so you can let the rest of the group know what you find useful. Many of the solutions may take a bit of work to make them part of your routine and therefore a habit, so you may need to persevere. If the first solution doesn't help, you can always try another.

Last week's memory problem:.....

Make a note here of the solution/s you tried and how you got on.

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Do Some Kind of Physical Activity

Now, more than ever, there is strong evidence that regular physical activity is associated with better brain function and reduced risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Exercise gives our brains a healthy boost.

Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain, stimulates brain activity and helps maintain the connections between brain cells. It reduces the risk of high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol, which are associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

There is evidence that people who don't do regular physical activity have an increased risk of developing dementia. It is still unclear just how much and how often we should exercise specifically to reduce our risk of dementia.

Of course exercise doesn't have to be something you just do as an activity. You can include it in your daily life by just doing more and being less sedentary. Evidence also indicates that this can reduce your risk of developing a dementia.


You need to get into the habit of exercising and once you do you'll wonder why you waited so long. Exercise makes us feel good and is a great activity to enjoy with friends.

The following are the recommended government guidelines for people over the age of 65. As with any physical activity, work

within your limits and speak to your GP if you have any concerns.

Physical Activity Guidelines

- **150 minutes of physical activity each week**
Enough to raise your heart rate and make you slightly out of breath but this will be different for everyone and can be spilt up e.g. into 10 minutes chunks



- **Muscle Strengthening twice a week**
- **Avoid sitting for long periods**

Muscle strengthening examples: Walking up and down stairs, standing up from a chair, carrying bags back from the shops, sitting exercises, yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi. Muscle strengthening is very important because it reduces your risk of falls. If you have a fall you are at risk of hitting your head which may affect your memory.

Avoid sitting for long periods. Research has suggested that remaining seated for too long is bad for your health, regardless of how much exercise you do. All-day movement is now seen as being just as important for the maintenance of good health as traditional exercise.

A recent study in *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that prolonged sitting was associated with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease and even cancer. It is quite feasible that it will be a risk factor for the development of dementia too.

Benefits of Physical Exercise

- Up to **35%** lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke
- Up to **50%** lower risk of type two diabetes
- A **30%** lower risk of falls (among older people)
- Up to a **30%** lower risk of depression
- Up to a **30%** lower risk of dementia

Physical Activity in Daily Life

- Playing with the grandchildren
- Consider taking the stairs
- Park further away from the shops
- Carry groceries back to the car/home
- Get off the bus a stop earlier
- Mow the lawn
- Get up and walk around the house during TV advert breaks
- Dig the garden
- Do the housework – hoovering or washing the bath

Any other ideas?

Maintaining the Changes You Have Made

This group was set up for people with MCI because evidence suggests that if you make changes in the areas of the 6 pillars of a healthy lifestyle for your brain you will reduce your risk of your memory problems getting worse more quickly and of developing a dementia. Making these changes will also help you manage your memory problems on a daily basis, as you will be more alert, and your brain will be able to work at its optimum level.

As you are aware, at present there is no medication for MCI that will directly improve your memory or prevent it from getting worse. Some of you may be taking medication that will help reduce the risk factors e.g. medication for your heart, cholesterol, blood pressure etc... and it is important that you continue to take these. However in the absence of any medication to treat MCI the evidence is that the best treatment are the changes that you have been making in this group in relation to the 6 pillars and that setting yourself goals every week increases your ability to make these changes.

However, we appreciate that it is often easier to make changes when you have the weekly support of others in a group and how this can be a challenge when a group finishes.

So, how will you continue to maintain the changes you have made in the 6 pillars?

Some Tips on How to Maintain Motivation

- Keep a copy of the 6 pillars of a Healthy Lifestyle for the Brain somewhere visible to remind you why you are trying to make changes

- Record your achievements regularly in a log. Give yourself credit whenever you do something designed to help you reach your goal
- Make lists (to do) and cross off when accomplished
- Accountability: Tell people of plans
- Put plans in diary, calendar or goal sheets
- When setting a goal make time to think about your week and see when you have the most time to fit in the goal
- Re-schedule your activity if something else comes up
- Make the plan interesting and something you really want to do
- Make the plan achievable and reasonable
- Consider doing regular things with friends or in a group
- Create a list of personal reasons why it's important to you to reach your goal and read this list (even when you don't feel like it) every day and whenever you are tempted to deviate from your plan
- Think about any obstacles and problem solve in advance when you set your goal
- If there is a Lifestyles Team in your area consider a referral for 1:1 support
- Decide on how you will reward yourself when you reach your goals
- Try to do things you have planned even when you don't feel like it, you will thank yourself afterwards and this may increase your motivation.
- Everyone will have set backs where things do not go to plan (sickness, family commitments etc...). That's okay, just start again next week

Changes I have made Chart:

One way to help keep ourselves motivated is to acknowledge the things we have already achieved and not forget them. On the following page there is a sheet you can simply add things you do to keep as a reminder of your achievements.

Spend a few minutes now writing down the things you have changed/achieved over the past five weeks. You will notice that this may also help you identify areas of the 6 pillars that you would still like to make changes in or maintain.

Changes I have made to help my memory.

Regular Exercise	
Healthy Diet	
Mental Stimulation	
Stress management	
Active Social Life	
Quality Sleep	

Memory Problem Solving

There is not enough time in the groups to cover all of your memory problems and new ones may arise. We practice using problem solving skills in the groups so that should you encounter new problems you will know how to solve them yourselves.

Some Common Memory Problems:

- Names of people, places and items
- Misplacing items
- Forgetting where
- Forgetting appointments and birthdays
- Forgetting what you have just been told
- Forgetting why you went into a room
- Forgetting the day/date
- Difficulty using new technology
- Difficulty learning something new
- Forgetting the plot in a book
- Concentration
- Repeating yourself in conversation
- Having to check that you have done something e.g. locking the door
- Forgetting to pay bills or reply to letters
- Losing track of conversation
- Forgetting what you went into a shop for
- Forgetting things you meant to take out with you e.g. wallet

Add any that are individual to you:

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Below are some solutions to a range of common memory problems, please also refer to the Alzheimer Booklet “The Memory handbook” for more solutions.

We suggest you select one solution to try at a time with any problems you are experiencing.

Forgetting Day/Date & Forgetting Appointments and Birthdays

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

1. Day and date:

- Get into a good routine/habit of checking what day it is and what you have on. Actively pay attention in the morning to what the day is.
- Buy a calendar clock – different types available, or put the calendar next to clock
- Cross off the days in the calendar/diary, use a page marker; turn the corners down.....
- The news – TV, Daily newspaper (dispose of old paper) and radio. Use these to help orientate yourself to the day/date
- Calendar Cube, turn it yourself everyday this helps you pay attention
- Talking watches if you have eyesight difficulties
- Mobile phone with date on it or set reminders (or ask others to do this for you)
- Some watches have the date on them
- Talking about the day in general conversation



2. Remembering appointments/birthdays/what you are doing that day:

- Use ONE calendar or diary, cross the days off so you know what the day is and get into the habit of looking at it every morning to see what you have on that day. Put the calendar next to date clock to help check you have the correct day.
- Put appointments into your calendar/diary immediately, when you make them. Do not write them on loose pieces of paper.
- Put a note on the breakfast table or bedside table the night before about what you have to do that day. Helps orientate you first thing in the morning.
- Use a whiteboard, write on it every night what is happening the next day, cross off when you have done it, put it by the bed/kettle, somewhere obvious
- Ask a member of your family to remind you, by phone if necessary.
- Stick to a routine, e.g. shopping days, an activity on a certain day. Relate to things that happen such as bin collection or weekly TV show.

- Talk about the things you will be doing during the day in general conversation
- Set an alarm clock and write a message and put it by the alarm to remind you what the appointment is.
- Have a calendar on the wall with all birthdays/anniversaries on it, check it weekly, link this to an existing weekly event (Sunday lunch)
- Buy a voice alarm recorder (memex) or use a mobile phone to set timed reminders for events/appointments.



Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

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Forgetting Names

You will find you forget people's names in different situations and the importance of forgetting that person's name to you will vary to you (i.e. more important if you forget a close family members' name than a vague acquaintance). Consider which of the solutions is relevant in a particular situation and how much of an effort you want to make to recall the name.

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

1. Learning new names of people:

- Make sure you are paying attention when someone tells you their name
- Use the name in the conversation to help store it in your memory, repeat it back when introduced to really make sure you are paying attention.
- Write it down after you have left them, this helps with the input part of the memory storage process, and also so you can rehearse it before seeing them next time also if you do forget it you have a record to remind you.
- Can you think of something memorable or make an association about the person.
- If you are in a group try to remember one or two names, not all the group, otherwise your memory will be overloaded and not remember any one's name.
- Use name badges in groups
- Put people's names in a note book or on your phone

Tips for when you meet someone you know but are unable to recall their name.

- Be honest, I'm sorry I have forgotten your name. You will often find most people have difficulty remembering names
- Prior to attending a social family event talk about the people who will be present linking something interesting of distinguishing about them and look at a photos

- Some people find referring to everyone as sweetheart or mate is a good strategy
- Focus on the conversation you are having rather than worrying about what the person's name is, otherwise you will miss the conversation too
- Use different senses – visualise them in places or situations where you may have come across them. Talk about what you know about the person
- First letter cueing: This involves going through the letters of the alphabet slowly to try and prompt the name of the person you are unable to recall.
- Photos with a name next to the photo. You could also have this on the mantel piece
- Spaced retrieval – refer to page 35 in the memory handbook
- Let it go, it will often come back to you later, then make a note of it.

Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

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Misplacing Items

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

- Make sure you pay attention when you put an item down or away, think or say out loud “I have put my keys on the kitchen table”.
- If you are in a rush or distracted try to think to yourself “I must pay particular attention to where I put something” this is often why we lose items.
- Colour contrast: place dark items on a light background and vice versa, buy a bright coloured phone/key ring/purse/glasses case.
- Put things in prominent places where you can see them
- Have a spare set of keys/glasses
- Keeping things in the same place all the time, a place for everything and everything in its’ place
- Remove clutter, have clear tops and spaces.
- If you struggle to find things in your hand bag. Consider having a light coloured lining to your bag and clear out the bag!
- Place important items together in one place, for example in an Anything Box, or a particular bowl/drawer– brightly coloured in an obvious place
- Keys by the door at eye level
- Locators – electronic locator devices – You attach a small electronic tag to the item. If you mislay it, you click a button on the locator device to make the tag beep. You will need to keep the locator device safe. Some locator bases can be mounted to a wall.
- For bills and correspondence, deal with them immediately and then file in an organised way.
- Keep sheds/garages tidy and organised, tools hung up Etc.
- Put a list of the item contents of draws and stick it to the front
- Have a list of where you keep certain items, get into a habit of putting them in the same place.

Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

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Taking Medication

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

- Tick off on a chart, calendar or diary when the medication has been taken straight after you have taken the medication. Get into the habit of doing this. You could put a calendar clock next to your chart to confirm the date
- Pay attention and just focus on taking the medication (one thing at a time)
- Keep the medication in a visible place or next to something to do with your daily routine – e.g. next to the breakfast cereal or the kettle
- Pharmacies can deliver medication
- Minimise the amount of medication you keep in your house. Perhaps ask for a weekly delivery of a blister pack
- Dispose of old and out of date medication by taking it to the pharmacy
- Set an alarm on your mobile or alarm clock
- If you have a community falls alarm some companies will be able to set up a telephone reminder service
- Portable alarm boxes to take you medication when you have gone out for the day
- Ask the GP to complete a medication review to find out if any medications can be reduced/stopped, or the times of day altered to fit in with your routine. For example; can all of your medication be taken in the morning?
- Link taking medication with a daily routine – e.g. with breakfast, evening meal
- Voice alarm recorders
- Pivotel pill dispenser: An automatic dispenser that you fill up once a week with an alarm that sounds when you need to take a tablet and it opens at the appropriate compartment. There are more advanced



models that prevent you taking too much medication by mistake.

- Dosette box – check date against a calendar clock



- Blister pack – check date against a calendar clock



Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

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Taking Messages and Remembering Information

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

- Paying attention to the key information when you talk to someone
- Make sure hearing aids/glasses on
- Minimise distractions – e.g. TV and radio
- One person to talk at once. For example, if you are out with family/friends
- Keep note book on you and write down the key information
- Repeat the information back to the person to clarify the key information
- Regular place to put the message. Keeping things in the same place – message pad beside the telephone
- Get into a regular routine of using a note book
- Association – is it interesting or meaningful to you? Does that help?
- When you are having a conversation use visual prompts as well. For example if you are talking about news' stories look at the newspaper whilst you are talking. If you are discussing family news, use photos, for instance a new baby – a photo with name underneath.
- Letting the message giver know: Asking the person giving you the message to slow down, keep it brief or repeat the message
- Rehearse the key information using a Question and answer format – Question: Where am I meeting my wife? Answer: Outside Marks and Spencer's. Repeat this several times back to your-self.
- Use a phone to store important information
- Put the message somewhere obvious so your partner/family member can see it when they come home. Have an agreed place where messages are kept.
- Writing it down
- Keep a journal of what you have done

- Don't try and remember everything, just the key points **Who? What? Where? When?** Practice just writing down the key information using these four prompts when you are watching the news or reading a newspaper article. Then have a conversation with someone using those prompts.

- Practice the above in the different situations

Tips for family or friends:

If your friend/family members repeatedly ask the same questions or gives the same story and the suggestions above have not worked or been tried, consider below:

- Friends and family to make sure they have your full attention prior to giving messages
- Friends and family to consider how they give messages or provide information – just give one message at a time and only give the key points (as below)
- Turn the questions into a discussion, rather than giving the information
- Try to understand why the person is repeating the same question - increasing anxiety about an upcoming event?
- Encourage person to refer to one diary/calendar every day
- If unable to change with strategies, accept and change how you respond:
- Friend/family member – this is not easy, but just repeat it rather than remind the person they have said or asked that already

Space to write your own or others that come up in the group

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The 4Ws

What:

Where:

Who:

When:

Word Finding

Choose an item from the list below and try it out. If it is unsuccessful try another one

The solutions to this can either be things the person with memory problems can do or ways in which friends and family can help.

Things you can do to help yourself:

- Explain in a different way, describe what you are trying to say
- Give yourself time, take the pressure off yourself, often a word will come if you stop trying to think of it.
- Let people know you sometimes take a little while to come to the right word and let them know how they can help you
- There is more to communication than talking, up to 90% of communication can be non- verbal, take the pressure off yourself, point at things if that helps, write it down, draw pictures, refer to books, photos, newspapers to remind you of the word.
- Let family and friends know how you would like to be helped when you are struggling to find the right word
- Write things down in preparation, especially if you know something is coming in advance when you will have to remember a word. Especially useful if you are making phone calls.
- Let it go and come back to it
- It can sometimes help if you feel able to use humour
- Taking deep breaths to help you relax will sometimes help, if we are stressed our memory is often negatively affected.

Things friends and family can do to help:

- Ask the person with memory problems how they would like you to support them - do they want you to finish sentences or give them time to do it themselves? Do they want you to tell them the word they are searching for, or not?
- Think about how you provide words, try not to make it overly obvious that you are giving an answer, but just include it in the conversation e.g. If someone is trying to recall the name of where they went yesterday, you may join in the conversation by saying “oh yes we had a lovely day at X, didn’t we?” and then let them continue with their recollection i.e. you are not taking over the conversation, but just adding in where required in a natural manner.
- Don’t make it a test, by trying to get someone to remember, unless you know they want you to do this.

Space to write your own or others that come up in the group:

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Useful Memory Aid Websites

These web sites have catalogues of products to help with memory, mostly aimed at people with a dementia, but many of the products are suitable for people with Mild Cognitive Impairment.

<http://www.graysonclocks.com/> Tel: 01959 543 660

<http://www.alzproducts.co.uk/> Tel: 024 7601 6414

<http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk/e-catalogue/> Tel: 0845 163 8317

<http://www.dlf.org.uk/> Tel: 0300 999 0004 DLF is a national charity providing impartial advice, information and training on independent living. They may be able to loan you some items to try for two weeks.

Lifestyle Information Websites

For more information go to www.getselfhelp.co.uk/sleep.htm

And Finally...

If you are struggling with your memory and don't know what to do. Phone your GP. He or she may then refer you back to a memory clinic.