

External Memory Strategies

- Keep a calendar in a central location. Write all important appointments and dates on the calendar. Make sure to review your calendar the night before and morning of to know what is planned for the day. Cross off the days after they pass.
- You may also want to carry a memory notebook containing a calendar, “To Do” list, phone numbers and your medications for reference. Sometimes, various banks and greeting card stores pass out mini calendars you can fit in a pocket or purse.
- Make a “To Do” list each morning of what you need to get done. Cross off the items after you have completed them. You can even prioritize your tasks and put them in order of importance to help keep you organized.
- Utilize a pillbox to help organize your medications and recall when to take them.
- If you prefer a medication journal, use a notebook to write down the medications you are taking and the times they need to be taken each day. You can check them off after you have taken them to help keep track.
- Keep important phone numbers (doctors, family and friends) and a list of current medications and allergies (food and drug) posted by all the telephones and in your purse or wallet. It’s a good idea to give a copy to your caregivers.
- Use timers when you are cooking or during other tasks to help remember things that need to be done (taking pills). Leave a note on the time to describe the task that needs to be completed if you are having difficulty recalling what to do when the timer rings.
- Always keep pen and paper by all telephones to write down important information you receive over the phone. Don’t be afraid to ask the person to whom you are speaking to slow down or repeat what they’ve said.
- Always prepare for your appointments before you go. Be sure to write down questions and concerns you want to discuss with the doctor. If you are unable to take someone with you, take notes so you can share your physician’s information with family members.
- When given lengthy instructions, do not rely solely on your memory. Write the information down in a pocket-sized notebook. Always repeat the information back to the person to make sure you understand the task.

- If you are unable to write effectively or efficiently, carry a pocket tape recorder or use your smart phone to record important messages or information. Listen to your messages every evening.
- Make sure to carry personal identification with you and the information of any caregivers, including names, addresses and phone numbers. An ID bracelet can also be made with this information.
- Establish a daily routine. Put your gasses in the same spot each night, put your wallet in the same location each day and take your medications at the same time.
- Read a magazine article or watch a show on TV. Later, ask yourself to recall the important details. Use questions words like who, what, when, where and why to help yourself recall details.
- Place sticky notes in visible locations (refrigerator, front door, etc.) to help you recall important items or details.
- Identify areas of memory difficulties at home. Generate possible solutions to compensate for them, and then implement those solutions.
- Create a table or graph to organize information into more manageable parts.