



Strategies to use Around the Home

Creating a “Memory Center”

A **memory center** is a central place in your home dedicated to scheduling, reminders, and planning daily tasks

- It can be helpful to keep this space decluttered and well lit

Keeping track of appointments:

- Keep a large calendar or whiteboard, large clock, notebook, and writing utensils
- Track appointments and reminders
- Create daily checklists

Important information:

- Keep important contacts, daily checklists, and important files such as health information
- Label everything clearly
- Use colorful sticky notes if helpful



Memory Systems At Home

Set Alarms: Reminders using clocks and other technology can help keep track of time, commitments, and schedules

i.e. Setting an alarm for a dentist appointment 15 minutes before you will need to leave home.

Scheduling Regular Appointments: If possible, set recurring appointments at the same time and day of the week so they become routine. You can even ask appointment schedulers to call ahead of appointments for a reminder.

i.e. Scheduling a weekly physical therapy appointment for every Thursday at noon.

Medication Boxes: Using a pill box set up the night or even week before use can be a helpful way to keep track of medications. You can also try setting alarms for taking medications. Adding sticky notes to bottles with reminders like “don’t take me” can be helpful to remind us if we’ve already taken a medication. Some pharmacies even partner with insurance companies to offer pre-sorted med packs!



Changes to Our Environment

Small changes to the spaces we live in can make a big difference in our abilities to locate important items and stay safe!

Declutter and Organize:

Keep items that are used together in the same place to remember where these items are located and when to use them

i.e. Keeping morning medications or vitamins near the cereal box can be a reminder to take those medications in the morning.

Add checklists to spaces where routines take place as a reminder of what you might need to do there

i.e. Tape a checklist to the back of the front door with a list of items to remember to take with you when leaving the house, such as keys, wallet, and cellphone.

Donate, sell or recycle items that are no longer needed to be able to locate items that are needed more easily

Lighting and Color:

Good lighting and using distinctive colors can be very helpful to locating and labeling items around the house

Additionally, good lighting can help prevent falls



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Managing Stress and Distraction



Mindfulness: Try to focus on one task at a time. State what you are doing aloud as you are doing it to bring awareness to the activity
i.e. "I am putting my keys on the key hook."

Focus: It may be easier to focus on mentally demanding tasks in the morning than later in the day. Additionally, getting good sleep is very important to focus and mental functioning.

Groups/ Crowds: Blocking out sights and sounds through narrowing our field of vision or using earplugs can be useful to focusing in crowds. Planning activities in public spaces around quieter times of day can also be helpful.

Stress: Memory changes can make accomplishing daily tasks more frustrating and stressful. Taking breaks from tasks and doing enjoyable activities to take care of ourselves before returning to the tasks at hand are great ways to manage this stress. ***Being kind to ourselves when we make mistakes or can't remember something is very important!***

References

1. <https://www.dementiacarers.ca/resources/tip-sheets/10-effective-memory-strategies/>