



Memory strategies after Stroke

A Stroke may cause problems with cognitive skills such as awareness, learning, understanding and remembering. Memory is the ability to take in, store and retrieve information. After a Stroke problems with memory are common although the severity of the problem will vary.

Here is a list of suggestions that may help you to remember things. Try them and find out which ones work for you.

Factors that impact memory

Alertness – In order to take in information you need to be alert. It is harder to remember things when you are tired and not concentrating. Make sure you get sufficient sleep. If you are tired take some time out and rest.

Attention – As well as being alert you need to be paying attention so that you can store information. Make sure you listen. Reduce distractions such as noise or being somewhere busy. Have good lighting. Be aware if your mind is wandering and bring the focus back or have a break.

Time – Take your time and don't rush or do things impulsively. You need to repeat or rehearse information to remember it and this now may take some extra time. You may find your ability to process information is slower.

Simplify things – Consider what you are doing or trying to remember and break it down into sections. Try to learn one section before moving on. Also, be organised. Plan for things that you know you may have some difficulty with.

Organise your environment – Reduce clutter. Have special places where you always keep things (for example – keys, glasses, medication).

Activity – It is important to keep your body and your mind as active as you can. Try to do things you enjoy, even if you have to do them a little differently. Try to socialise with others, even if it is just on the phone. Read, play games or do puzzles if you enjoy them.

Self-monitoring – Pay attention to how you are doing and feeling. This will assist you to keep focused on whether or not you are achieving what you want. Do you need a rest? Do you need to repeat or practice something? Are you losing concentration? Be kind to yourself. Give yourself a pat on the back when you do something well.

Ask for assistance – Sometimes you may need to tell people that you have trouble remembering. Get them to write information down for you, make their instructions short and clear and repeat them.

PLEASE TURN OVER





Memory Strategies after Stroke

Pace yourself – Plan and take your time. Don't try to do too much at one time or on one day. This will help with managing fatigue, stress and anxiety which can all reduce your ability to remember things.

Strategies to compensate for memory problems:

Things you can do:

- Rehearsal and repetition
- Rhyming
- Association – link things together
- Categorisation – put things in groups
- Visual Imagery – picture it
- Acronyms – use the first letters to make a word
- Verbalisation – say it out loud
- Storytelling – make up a story

Things you can use:

- Diary/Journal
- Wallchart
- Electronic cueing devices
- Alarm clocks and timers
- Calendar
- Lists
- Notebooks
- Prompt signs and cues

How partners, family and carers can assist:

- Help to organise and maintain the home environment.
- Establish consistent daily routine.
- Reinforce the use of strategies.
- Join a carer support group.
- Be patient and don't continually ask questions to test them.