

## **Brain Strength: Specific Strategies to Help You Remember**

**Use daily planning to help you organize information:** Use calendars/ day planners and journals to keep track of appointments and information you want to remember.

- Write down appointments and schedules, "to do" lists, important dates, phone numbers and addresses, meeting notes, in your day planner/log book.
- Use a checklist containing daily reminders. Put it in a convenient location, where you can look at it frequently throughout your day.
- Carry around a small pad of paper, making it easy to write down reminders as needed.
- Put a calendar in an easy-to-see spot, mark down upcoming events/appointments.
- Place post-it notes around the house and work to remind you of important tasks.
- Prepare for the next day by setting out the things you will need the night before.
- Put things, such as car keys, back in their designated place after you use them, so that they will be easy to find the next time you need them.
- Keep important phone numbers easily displayed next to your phone, and carry a small address book in case you forget someone's number while you are out.

**When you are experiencing cognitive fatigue while you are working on something, consider:**

- Have a plan so you know exactly what you'll need to do in order to complete your task.
- Take frequent breaks, such as a walk, to disrupt cognitive fatigue. Try a change of environment, play a quick game or meditate for 10 minutes then return to the task.

- Divide your tasks into portions, take a break each time you complete each part.
- People are more easily distracted when hungry or tired.
- Clear your mind of distractions. When distracting thoughts pop up, write them down. Recording your thoughts will help to quickly clear them and ensure that you remember them later.
- Pick a time of day to do the task when you'll be the most alert.
- Also, consider what activities and situations are your **energy wasters**. Identifying these can allow you to find ways to adapt what you are doing or delegate the activity.

**Support information getting into your memory:** Memory is improved when you use strategies that reinforce the information you want to recall. Consider not only thinking about what you want to remember, but **writing the information down, reading the information, and then saying it out loud**. For example, you want to remember 3 activities you need to do tomorrow – write the activities down, read what you have written, and then read it out loud. Follow this process the night before and the morning of the activities you want to do them.

- As you write things down, take your time and be deliberate.
- Pair pictures and stories with new memories you are trying to remember.
- Focus your attention on key words, not whole sentences.
- Avoid multi-tasking when trying to learn or remember something. It diminishes your focus on specific task or information
- Use journals to document things you want to remember. Document information in a neutral or positive tone. Write down the details you want to remember, like a travel diary. At the end of the day, review what you have written, reflect on it.

**When returning to work,** remember: much of our memory is maintained by daily usage. If you have been off work, you will likely need to relearn some information and processes. You can also consider reviewing and practicing some Brain Fog Session handout – BCCA, VIC P&FC – March 2012

work information and tasks to lessen the amount of information you might forget.