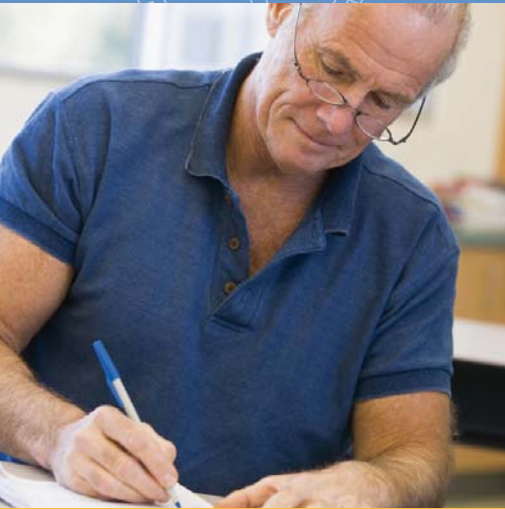


## Maximising your thinking and memory abilities

# Basic tips

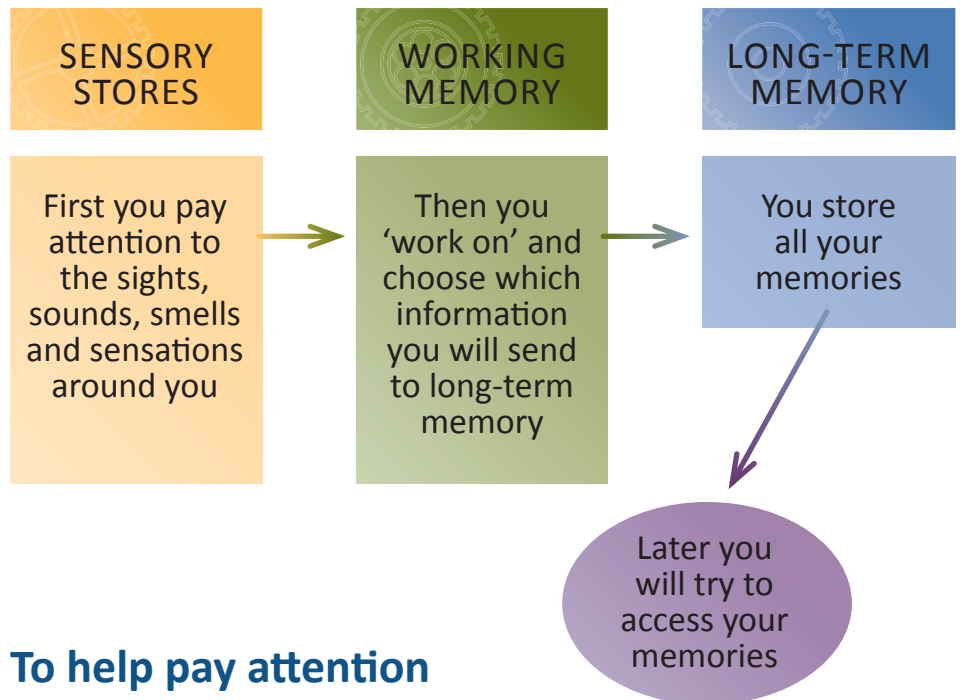
## for improving memory and concentration



### About this handout

This handout is for anyone who is experiencing some forgetfulness in day-to-day life and for their friends and family. It aims to provide some simple strategies to help maximise your memory function.

### An overview of memory processes



### To help pay attention

- Focus on one activity at a time
- Allow sufficient time to think about information and to respond
- Make sure you focus your attention on the person speaking; put on your glasses or hearing aids
- Keep distractions to a minimum when considering important issues (e.g., turn off the radio and TV)

### To help 'work on' and store new information

- Write information down in a diary or calendar. This helps to organise the day or week. Avoid using little bits of paper to record information – these can be easily lost. One central calendar or diary works best
- Carry the diary or notebook with you and write down important information
- Each day, on a white/ black board, write the day's date and planned activities



## Key Point

**When memory problems are severe, or if dementia has been diagnosed, carers and friends need to help identify and put helpful strategies into place**

- Have a notebook by the telephone to record telephone messages and conversations
- Use written checklists, and tick off tasks that you have completed
- “Rehearse” and go over something important that you want to remember
- Break information down into smaller, meaningful parts
- Feel comfortable about asking other people to repeat what they have said if you haven’t understood them properly
- Be methodical and put items away in their designated place
- Organise paperwork into separate folders/ categories to avoid losing important items
- Write down the names of new acquaintances or old friends and review the list before meetings with these people

## To help access the information you need

- Establish and maintain a regular routine
- Leave things that are needed in prominent places
- When you think of something that has to be done, try to do it immediately
- Ask a friend or relative to remind you of important information or appointments
- Use a segmented pill box to help you remember to take medication
- Set a timer or watch alarm for an important task that needs attending to
- Label cupboards or drawers so that you can remember where things are kept
- Develop the habit of consulting your diary or calendar at regular times