

Overcoming Absent-mindedness

Which of the following memory techniques have you used to avoid absent-mindedness? Which ones do you think would be helpful to you?

1. Put an item to be remembered in an unusual place. For example, put the clothes to be taken to the dry cleaners by the front door.
2. Have a memory place. This is a special place for keys, glasses, pills, notes to yourself, etc.
3. Organize your environment: a place for everything and everything in its place.
4. Set the alarm clock or oven timer to help you remember to do something at a certain time.
5. Keep a good calendar and list of things to do. Keep a notepad in your pocket, by your bed and in your car.
6. If a notepad is not available, write on your hand.
7. Use object cues. This is similar to the string around your finger. For example: turn your ring or watch around; put a crumpled bill in with your change; tip the lampshade. Noticing something different about the object will remind you that you are supposed to remember something. Review the association often so you don't forget what the changed object represents.
8. Write notes to yourself, posted in conspicuous places.
9. Don't procrastinate. Do it now! Then there is less opportunity for forgetting.
10. Talk to yourself: "I'm turning off the stove. The stove is off." For things to be done in the future: "Call Dr. Jones at 5:00. Dr. Jones wants me to call at five."
11. If you find yourself in another room and can't recall why, go back to where you started. This frequently brings back the memory. Sometimes just imagining yourself in the previous place is enough.
12. Count items you take with you so you won't leave any behind.