



SUPPORTIVE MEMORY GUIDE

Empowering you with practical tips
and useful technologies

eHealth and Disruptive Technologies
Occupational Therapy

Introduction

This ebook has been developed by a team of occupational therapists.

It is a guide to practical solutions that aim to reduce the impact of your dementia diagnosis and facilitate you to enjoy time with family and friends.

Occupational therapists work with clients living with dementia to maximise independence in daily life.

The practical strategies in this ebook aim to support independence and build resilience.



Memory

How does our memory work?



In order to remember something you must first be able to notice and attend to it. This will enable the memory to be stored. When a memory is stored effectively it can then be retrieved.

What are the types of memory?



Retrospective memory: long-term memory of people, words and events that happened in the past.



Prospective memory: memory of something that needs to be done in the future, e.g upcoming tasks or events



Procedural memory: memory of how to do things e.g how to use a household appliance .

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Routines & Healthy Habits

Chapter One

A close-up photograph of a yellow ceramic mug filled with dark coffee, resting on a matching saucer. The mug and saucer are placed on a white, textured, woven surface. In the foreground, the spiral binding of a notebook is visible, partially obscuring the bottom of the saucer.

Routines and Healthy Habits

We are all creatures of habit and our daily routines can provide us with a sense of familiarity and consistency.

Good routines and healthy habits can be a great support for people living with dementia.

Predictable routines such as going to the hairdresser every Friday or meeting your group every Monday is supportive for orientation to day, date and time. Established habits can be protective as dementia progresses. Think of the person that always hung their keys on the hook when they came in the door, this will likely continue for them longer as it is part of their procedural memory and they will do it automatically.

Taking control of your daily routines is something you can work on, and new positive habits can be built into your day and week.

This will take time, effort and help.

Sit down with a cup of coffee and think of the following:

- ✓ What does your routine look like now?
- ✓ Are you disorientated at any point in the day?
- ✓ Are there certain tasks that are challenging?
- ✓ Do you forget regular tasks e.g. taking medication, appointments, or taking out the bins?
- ✓ What healthy activities should you be incorporating into your day?

Here are some ways to build a good routine.



Prioritise the routine you want to establish and work on this, once this is consistent try another.

Allocate time and space to work on these. The sooner they become part of your daily routine the more they'll support you into the future.



Creating a schedule each week can be a great way to plan your activities. Writing these down and keeping them in a visible place can be a great way to ensure you complete the activity.

Ask a family member or friend to support this routine. Building new routines will take time to get familiar with, and family can support you at the beginning by prompting you.



A memory book is a useful tool to help you remember what you do from day to day. It can be a useful tool to prompt yourself in conversation with others and to remind yourself where you have been. [Watch video here](#)



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Remembering Strategies

Chapter 2

Remembering Strategies

Remembering Someone's Name

- **Use visual imagery.**
 - If you meet a lady called Rose imagine her sitting in the middle of a rose bush, or someone called Kerri imagine them in a Kerry Jersey.
- **Use rhyme or alliteration.**
 - You can do this by finding a distinguishing feature and linking it to the name for eg Blondy Brenda.
- **Visualise a Scenario**
 - Imagine “seeing” the person in different situations where you may have come across them, such as bowling or having coffee.



Pay attention



Repeat the name



Write the name down



Use the associations above

Remembering a Completed Task

Sometimes you might forget you have completed a task. Use visual imagery to assist with this, for example:

- When switching off a plug imagine the prongs jumping right out at you.
- When you place your wallet on the table picture loads of notes tumbling out of it.

This will help you store the information, which will make it easier to remember.

Mnemonics are a useful way of remembering information.

For example **R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork
Gave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain for
remembering the colours of the
rainbow.

We can make up rhymes to
remember shopping lists and
other important information.

Remembering Information

When reading the newspaper or watching the news, break the information down in the 4 W's

Who ?

What ?

Where ?

When?

This will condense the information and allow you to recall it easier.

Make a note of anything important to you in your memory book.





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Scheduling and Planning

Chapter 3



SCHEDULING AND PLANNING

A diagnosis of dementia is different for everyone, but some common issues people experience is with short term memory. This can impact on what you have done and what you must do.

When short term memory is impacted there are supportive strategies you can use to help you remember important dates and every day events. Also to help you plan meaningful, stimulating and social activities that are important to keep you engaged.

Have a look through the strategies on the following pages to find one or more that would work for you

DIARY

A diary is great for adding important dates, appointments and any events coming up.

Your diary can help you to remember these upcoming events and can also be an aid to recall what you did in the days before.

It is essential to build a good routine to support you successfully using a diary every day.

More information



CALENDAR



Calendars are another useful support to add important information. Calendars with large boxes provide space to write in upcoming birthdays, appointments, bin days etc.

It's important the calendar is kept in an uncluttered area so you can check it daily. Like anything new it may take some time to become familiar with and requires effort to build into your routine.

[Click here for a printable calendar template](#)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE



A Weekly Schedule is a good way for you to plan your week.

It's also helpful to set goals of things you want to get done and to ensure you schedule in meaningful and stimulating activities. Use the tips in this ebook to support using a weekly schedule successfully.

[Click here for a weekly planner template](#)

DAILY PLANNER

A Daily Planner like a weekly schedule is a great way to prepare your day and help focus your goals for the day. Using this either the night before or in the morning can support you to plan activities and chores.

Having daily goals gives a sense of purpose to the day. These might be big chores such as doing the shopping or smaller activities such as calling a friend. Completing them will give you a sense of a achievement.

[Click here for a daily planner template](#)





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A Supportive Home Environment

Chapter 4



A Supportive Home Environment

Our environments can be a great support to us all, especially our home environment. However, as dementia progresses it can become challenging to manage tasks or locate items, and a cluttered environment may cause confusion or even falls risk.

Finding a consistent place for items that are used regularly is a good strategy and habit to build. For example, place a hook on the wall near the front door to hold your keys, or place a basket in your kitchen for everyday items such as glasses, wallet, and mobile phone.

Use magazine files or stacking trays to organise your items as soon as you get them e.g. bills, appointment letters, take away menus etc. Put clear labels on these where appropriate to help to identify them.

The following page has a checklist to help you re-organise your home environment to be more supportive.

De-Clutter Checklist

ONE AREA AT A TIME

Decide one area in your home to focus on first. Taking on too much at the beginning can be overwhelming and lessen your success.

WHEN WILL YOU DO IT?

Consider the best time of day for you, maybe in the morning you might be more energised.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED

Use boxes or bin liners and add labels such as rubbish, for storage or for donating. You might also find it helpful to have folders for paperwork and vacuum bags for storing clothes.

WILL YOU NEED HELP?

It can be a big job depending on your space, consider asking a family member or friend.

BREAK IT DOWN

If you have decided to work on the kitchen, select an area within the kitchen to focus on, for example *that* drawer filled with everything! Set small objectives that are easy to achieve

KEEP IT HANDY

Some items may be for disposing, some may be sentimental, some may be seasonal and for storage. The most important thing is you ensure you have the everyday items you need to hand.

LABELS

Use lots of labels to make clear what goes where. If you organised all of your favourite takeaway menus into a folder, label this *takeaway menus*.





Good Lighting

The aging process on our eyes challenges how we interact with our environments. It is strongly advised you make sure you test your eyes regularly.

However, dementia can cause changes in the part of the brain where visual information is perceived.

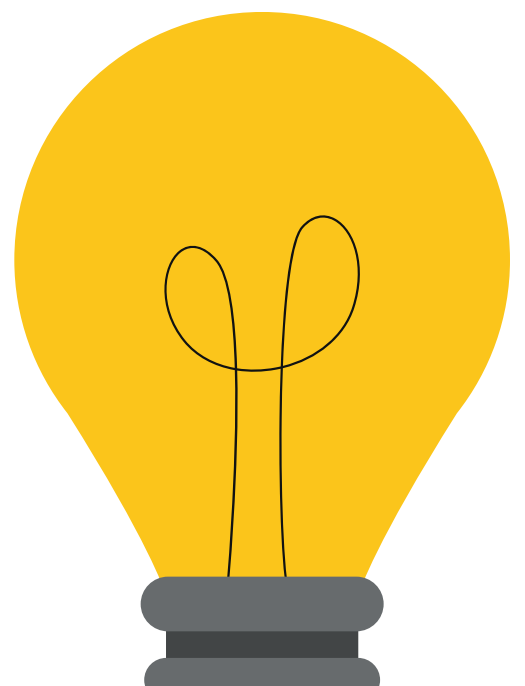
Poor vision and poor lighting can greatly impact on engaging in activities and safety.

You can find out more about good lighting at the National Council for the Blind (NCBI)

Link to [NCBI Website](#)

Top Tips for Good Lighting

- **Natural daylight** is important, however it can cause a glare and so you should consider this when undertaking an activity in your home.
- Some **energy saving bulbs** can take time to get to their full light strength, consider this in areas of risk such as the bathroom or at the stairs and replace if necessary.
- **Sensor lights** for night time will light up the area once motion is detected e.g. in the hallway or bathroom.
- **Fluorescent battery** operated lights can be helpful in dark spaces such as a cupboard, wardrobe or drawer.
- **Task lighting** is great to have for specific activities such as reading, knitting etc.
- **Light shades** can restrict the light dispersed so consider this in areas where you need optimal light



Design and Colour Contrast

As our eyes age perceiving colour can become harder, and so strong colour contrasts helps us identify certain areas.

This will be different for everyone but you can consider the following principles if you think it may help you:

- Use colour that contrast with the background for certain activities e.g. a different colour table cloth to your crockery
- Patterns and poor contrasting colours on carpets may make it difficult to perceive a change in floor level e.g. a step
- Bathrooms are typically white floor and wall tiles and white basin, bath and toilet, for some people this can make the environment hard to perceive. There are different colour toilet seats available which help identify the toilet against the white background and there are taps that are easier to use

General Safety in the Home

- Keep everyday items accessible and use visuals to help identify them easily (see next page for more advice on this)
- Ensure the floor and your pathway throughout the house are clear
- Remove any clutter building up, use the checklist if you need to do a clear out.
- Make sure wires and leads are kept secure and don't become a trip hazard.
- Loose rugs can be a trip hazard, so remove them or secure down with rug tape if suitable.

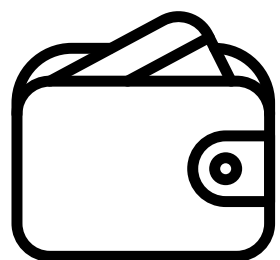
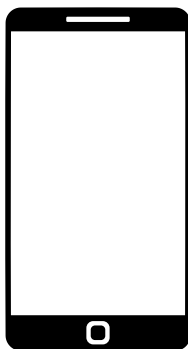


Prompts in Your Home

There are simple reminders or prompts you can place in your home that can help you remember to do a certain task and be safe. Think about the times you may be forgetting certain activities and tasks, for example; have you forgotten to turn off the oven?

You can set up simple prompts in your home to alert you to recall or complete an activity or task.

On the following pages you will find some ideas on how to incorporate prompts into your routine.





LABELS

Labels are useful to add to the cover of a folder, or to a box of summer clothes, or on kitchen cupboards to identify specific items.

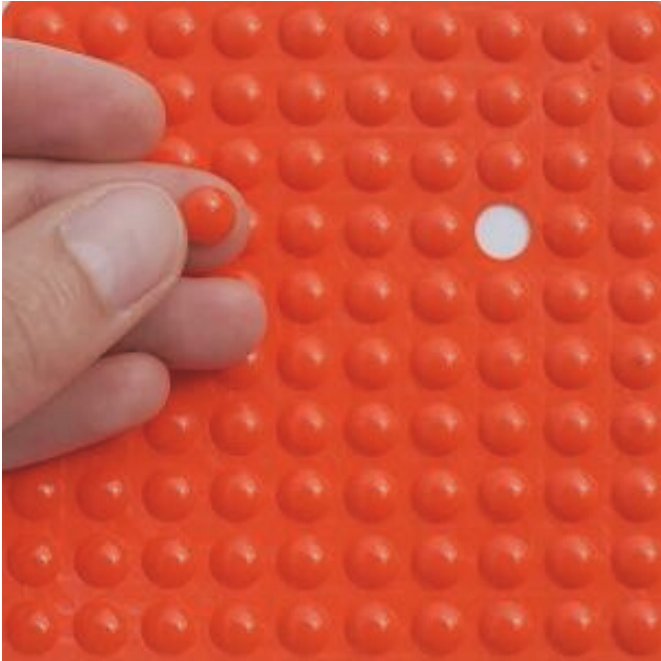
POST-IT NOTES

Use post-it notes when you want to remind yourself of something, e.g. hang out clothes at 2pm. Once the activity is done make sure to throw the note away so it doesn't cause confusion.



LISTS

Keeping lists supports your memory, but make a system that works for you; where will you keep your lists?



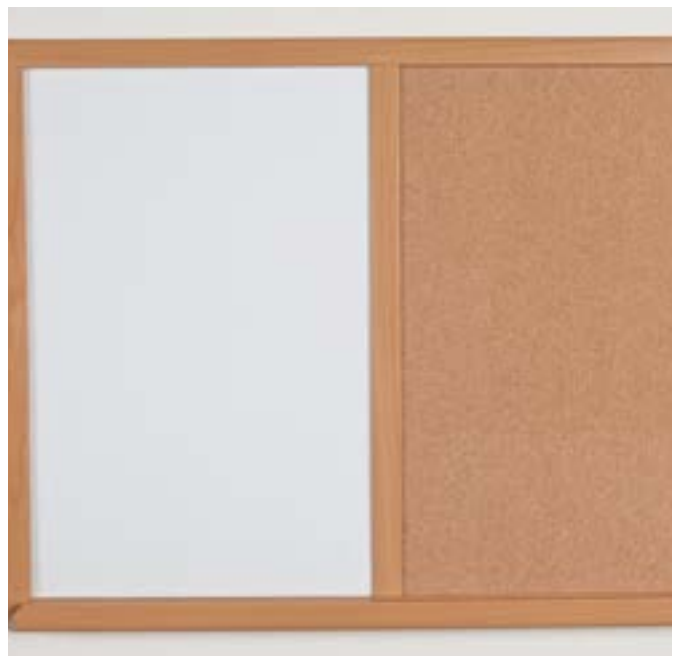
BUMPON STICKERS

Bumpons are coloured and raised stickers you can add to something you want to stand out and identify, for example on the volume button of the remote control.

MEMORY BOARDS

These are convenient to add and display reminders and appointments. On the cork board you can add your calendar, important numbers and anything else you need

[Watch a demo video here](#)



PRINTED SIGNS

These are useful at places where you consistently need a prompt, for example place near the cooker switch to ensure cooker is turned off.





Tips for Clear Signs

Good colour contrast is important, it helps the prompt/sign to stand out and ensure you see it. Strong colours tend to be better but it will depend on your environment

Images might suit you better, you can find an image for almost anything online!

Talking Tiles

Talking Tiles are small push devices that play a recording. You can record up to 80 seconds of audio, and add a picture. You can use these creatively and place them in your home.

For example, if you find you are forgetting to add the softener to your wash, or put on the wrong cycle you can record instructions and information, add an image of the washing machine and place on the wall next to the washing machine. When it comes to doing the activity, simply press the talking tile to remind you of the important steps involved.

[Click to watch a short video explaining how to use Talking Tiles](#)



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Managing Medication

Chapter 5

Managing Medication

Some issues and solutions are given in this section, however even with strategies and supports it cannot be guaranteed that medication will be taken. To learn more about managing your medication you can talk to your occupational therapist at the Memory Technology Resource Room. [More information on MTRR here.](#)

- Ask your pharmacist to create a **medication blister pack** for you. The pharmacist will divide each dose of your medication and place this into the correct time of day compartment.
- Alternatively you can buy a **weekly Medication Pill Box** which is reused and filled by you or a family member. There are a range of these available to buy at pharmacies. Some of these have more than one box per day to support people taking medication at multiple times during the day.

*Consistency is key.
Whichever strategy or
technology you use it
is important to work
on a establishing a
good routine for taking
medication.*



Tips to Support Taking Medication

- Make sure you have a **clear and consistent place** for your medication e.g. on the kitchen counter near your orientation space.
- Use a **visual prompt** and keep it on your orientation board so you can see each day a reminder to take the medication.
- **Set a timer or reminder** on your phone or smart home device that goes off each day at the time for medication
- The **Medisafe app** is a medication reminder on your phone. It will remind you at necessary times in the day to take medication. [Use this link to learn more.](#)
- **Assistive Technology Medication Reminders** there are selections of medication boxes with alarms you can programme, this may be suitable for you however they require support to set up and become familiar with

[Click here for a short video demonstration of how to use an automatic medication reminder.](#)



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Simple Home Technologies

Chapter 6



Memory Technology Resource Rooms

In Ireland the HSE has set up the Memory Technology Resource Rooms (MTRRs) which are a dedicated service for people with memory problems and dementia. The MTRRs have a range of simple assistive technologies on demonstration so you can see how these work and how they could be a support to you.

MTRR's provide a wide range of useful technologies for prompting and reminding, communication, locator devices, medication dispensers, safety, smart homes and much more.

This chapter provides information on some of the simple home technologies to support memory and engagement available.

[You can find out more about the MTRRs at the Understand Together website here](#)

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Object Locators

Do you struggle to find your keys, wallet, bag or other items you use regularly?

You can add a locator keyring to your wallet/keys that will connect to a remote control. When the object is missing you press the remote which will set off an alarm on the keyring. There's also locator devices that connect to your smartphone

[Watch a demo video here](#)



Orientation Clocks

An orientation clock provides the time, day, date and updates automatically. They are helpful if you regularly forget which day it is, and work really well with an orientation strategy such as scheduling and planning.

There are a range of orientation clocks available and you can learn more about these at the MTRR.

[Watch a demo video here](#)



Simple Remote Controls

Television remote controls have many buttons which are often small with poor colour contrast and a challenge to use.

Simple remote controls address these issues. They have limited buttons and have good colour contrast making it easier to identify. Set up can be tricky and they need to be compatible with your television. You'll find these in specialist stores and in some electrical stores



Home Phones

Home phones have good colour contrast and large buttons to support people with visual and memory impairment to make calls. Some of these home phones have photo buttons to add pre-programmed numbers and you can add an image or name of the person's number making it quick and easy to call. Often these phones also are hearing aid compatible and may light up as it rings, supporting people with hearing impairments.



Motion Sensor Lights

Lights that turn on when they detect movement can be a help at night time to guide you. They are useful in areas such as in your hall way or bathroom.

Some automatic lights can be placed on the skirting board by your bed so when you get out it will detect the movement and turn on the light.

There are a range of these available at electrical stores.



Task Lighting

There are lamps available that are designed for improving your visibility for a task e.g. reading.

The National Council for the Blind Ireland (NCBI) have good supportive products for people who have visual impairments.

The portable lamp with magnifier is ideal task light, it can be charged and moved to where you require additional good lighting.

Lamp available here



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Smart Home Technologies

Chapter 7

Smart Home Technology

We are now living in the era of smart home technologies that provide us with information, allows us to set reminders and manage our connected home devices. These are voice activated technologies, and there are a wide range of features and devices you can use. There are two common smart home technologies; Amazon Alexa and Google Home. These are both similar in how they work, however there may be slight differences between the two. These devices are available at various price points, and all require Wi-Fi to work.

Most smart devices are compatible with smart home technology, but it is worth checking this before purchasing. Most electrical stores have excellent tech support workers who can help you with smart homes. Initial setup may need support and patience to get them up and running, so try one thing at a time and get familiar with using it.

This chapter provides ideas of how you can use your smart home features and devices to support engagement and independence.



Watch a short demo video

In this video we demonstrate an Amazon Alexa, however most features are similar across all brands.

Smart Home Features

Timers and Alarms

You can ask your device to set a timer, for example when you're cooking you can ask "Alexa set a timer for 20 minutes". When the 20 minutes are up your smart home device will let you know.

Reminders

Consider the times you think of something during the day and say "I must remember to do that later" - have you ever forgotten?

Use the reminder feature to help with this. When you think of it, simply say:

"Hey Google, remind me to make a dentist appointment tomorrow"

Lists

You can create different types of lists with Alexa or Google by saying "Alexa create a list" or "Hey Google, create list".

You can even link your list with the Alexa or Google app on your smartphone. You might use this when making a shopping list, simply ask Alexa or Google to add items as you think of them. Then when you are shopping your list will be available on your phone.

Information and News

You can ask Alexa or Google anything and they will find you the answer!

"Alexa, what is the weather forecast for today?"

Connect your Calendar

If you have Google or iCloud calendar on your smart phone you can connect this with your Alexa or Google home, this will require set up initially but once it is linked you will be able to add and access events and appointments.

**“Hey Google,
whats in my
calender today?”**

Sticky Notes

If you are using your Alexa or Google with other family members over multiple devices then you can add sticky notes that will appear on everyone’s screen. This might suit your family who might want to make sure you see a reminder or notice.

There is plenty information online on how to get the most out of your smart home device.

- For more on Alexa Skills [click this link](#)
- For information on Google Skills [click this link.](#)

Examples of what you can ask your smart home device:

**"Hey Google,
play Newstalk
FM"**

**“Alexa,
call Tom"**

**“Alexa, start my
morning
routine"**

Smart Home Enabled Devices

There are a range of smart devices that are compatible with your Alexa or Google smart home. These devices connect to Alexa/Google, and allow you to control household items using your smart home technology.

Some of these are shown below.



Smart Plug



Smart Bulb



Smart Thermostat



Smart Doorbell



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Smart Phones

Chapter 8



Smart Phones

Smartphones are a great way to stay connected through phone & video calls, and through social media. There are also many helpful and engaging apps available for smart phones

As dementia progresses engagement with your smartphone may become challenging and there are some adaptations you can do to your phone to support optimal engagement.

This section provides tips on ways to accomplish this.

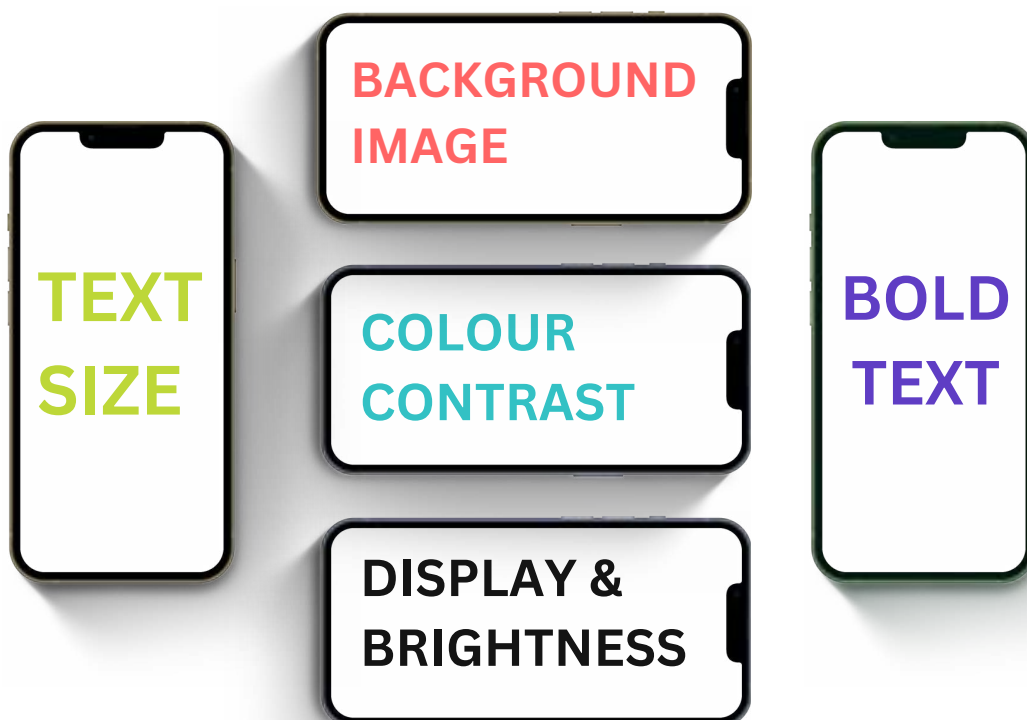
Simplifying your screen

These are a few simple tips to simplify your screen:

- Delete apps that are never used.
- Group together lesser used apps and move to a folder on a different screen. This will ensure the apps regularly used will be more accessible for the user.
- Consider turning off notifications. Sometimes we have too many notifications popping up on our screen. This may cause confusion and frustration.

Enhancing your screen

Almost all smart phones and tablets have an easy mode or accessibility in their settings app. Each phone will be different but generally the following can be adjusted:



Simplify Making a Call

Accessing your phones contacts to make a phone call can sometimes be a challenge. These are a few simple ideas to help ensure success finding a contact:

Top Tips

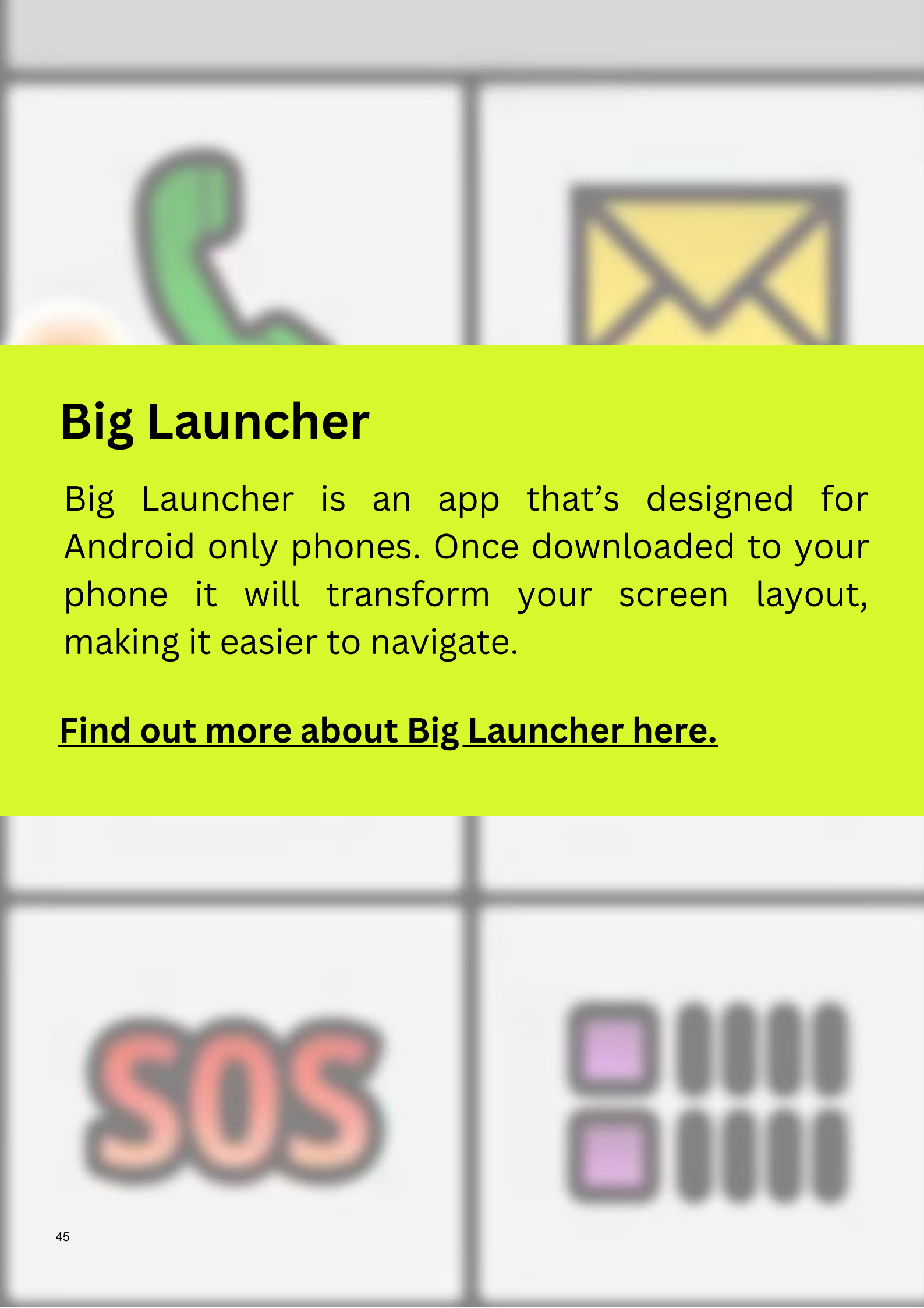
- Ensure that your **phone app is clearly visible** on the home screen.
- **Delete contacts** that are not used.
- Add your **most important and most used contacts to your favourites** list to make it easier to find contacts.
- Add **photos** to your contacts to make it easier to find the contact.

Additional Supports on your Device

There are many ways to adapt your smartphone to make it easier to use. Below are some of the most common ways,

- **Sounds and Alerts** – Make sure the sound and volume is set to an appropriate level. Vibrate may also be supportive for a person who has a hearing problem. Some phones will flash a light to alert you to a notification such as a text message, view these in your settings
- **Reminders on your phone**- you can set reminders to take your medication etc. Tip: at the beginning of the week or month schedule in known appointments, birthdays, bin days etc. If you need help ask a family member to support you.
- **Notes** – use notes to jot down items to remember, or something you want to recall for a later time
- **Voice Activating** – Most phones have a voice activating feature such as Siri for Apple phones or “Ok Google” on Android phones use this to set a reminder or ask what the weather is like and much more.
- **Hearing** – most phones have supports for hearing, such as noise cancellation or hearing aid compatibility

[Click here for further tips for adapting your smartphone](#)



Big Launcher

Big Launcher is an app that's designed for Android only phones. Once downloaded to your phone it will transform your screen layout, making it easier to navigate.

[Find out more about Big Launcher here.](#)

Doro Phones

Doro is a brand that have created mobile phones that are easier to use and engage with. They use the principles of good colour contrast to support visibility of the buttons and the screen content.

They also have large buttons that can make it easier for the user to press. Most of their phones have an SOS button on the back that allows you to set up and use quickly to access help.

Doro have a range of mobile phones from basic simple pre-programmed phones to supportive smart phones. You can view these on their website [here](#) or watch find links to our **support videos here.**



Smartphone Apps

Apps (short for applications) are software for your smartphone or tablet computer. Some scheduling, reminders, brain training, location and reminiscence apps are shown here

<u>Google Calendar App</u>	<u>Medisafe Reminder App</u>	<u>MindMate</u>
Google Calendar can be used to add in special, events and reminders.	Medisafe app is a medication reminder on your phone.	MindMate app offers you daily activities and stimulating brain training challenges. The app is developed for people living with dementia.
<u>Luminosity App</u>	<u>Jigsaw Puzzle App</u>	<u>Find My iPhone</u>
Luminosity is a brain training app that focuses on key areas of the brain.	A jigsaw you can do online! There are a selection of images and sizes to choose from.	Find my iPhone is an app you can use with other iPhones or iPads to locate your phone if it is missing. Or you can share your location with family to show where you are.
<u>Google Maps</u>	<u>Irish Film Institute App</u>	<u>Inspired App</u>
Google maps is an app to find a destination and gives directions to get there. You can also share your location with family to show where you are.	The Irish Film Institute app is a cultural app with a wide selection of film footage and images of Ireland from decades passed.	The Inspired app is a reminiscence app developed for people living with dementia. It is a space to add personal photos, videos and recordings of special events



Supportive Online Videos

Minding Your Memory Videos

This is a 6 part series created by occupational therapists from the Cork and Kerry Community Health service. These short videos include topics such as how your memory works, attention, driving, and practical strategies. You can find these videos on the Cork and Kerry Community Healthcare You Tube channel [here](#)

Free Dem Films

These animated films were created by Sabina Brennan of Trinity College and Trinity Brain Health. They provide public awareness around important issues of memory and brain health. The engaging films cover topics such as How Does Memory Work, Why is Attention Important, and What Can You Do to Keep Your Brain Healthy. You can find these videos at the FreeDem Living website [here](#)



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Keeping Active and Engaged

Chapter 9

Keeping Active and Engaged

After a diagnosis of dementia it is important to stay active and engaged in your home activities, in physical activities and within your community.

For some people this may become challenging and the diagnosis may have caused worry or anxiety. However, you can make some changes to support continued engagement.

Staying involved in your daily activities out of the home is important to continue both for your independence and social opportunities.

Shopping, running errands, meeting a friend for coffee or attending a social group or club are ways to keep active and adds to your weekly routines. These activities are also great for our brain health.





TOP TIPS

FOR KEEPING ENGAGED

Set yourself a goal (ensure it is realistic)

Do something you love

Find activities that are social

Tell others what you plan to do

Praise yourself



Activities at Home

Engaging in daily household activities are important to continue, however you might notice some mistakes and may need to make some modifications to support success.

With cooking or baking for example, you might forget an ingredient, or to heat the oven or the cooking time. One of these can impact on the success of the activity, so it can be a great help to plan the steps involved in the activity before you begin.

Breaking down an activity into the individual steps and requirements will allow you to focus on all that is needed and help eliminate or reduce error.



Activities Outside the Home

Staying connected and engaged in our community has great benefits. Whether it's sport, going shopping or just meeting friends for a coffee, it's important to our well-being and independence.

Like breaking down any activity before you begin, it is helpful to plan before you leave the house to ensure you have all you need and are prepared for the activity.

[Click here for an activity planner template](#)

What will you need?

You may need bank details/card/cheque book, or the location of where you're meeting your friend. Do a quick check that you have these along with your phone, wallet and keys. Also check the weather you may need an umbrella!

How long will it take?

If you've planned to meet your friend at 2pm in Market Café but want to get to the bank and get shopping done first maybe you need to leave at 12pm to allow time to park and not be rushed

How will you get there?

If you need to get a bus plan your route. If you are driving: Where is best place to park? You'll need change for the parking meter or use the local parking app to pay for parking.

Other apps to assist with planning your journey are [Google Maps](#) or [Transport for Ireland](#).

Social Groups and Clubs

Enquire with your local primary care team about groups that are being run at your local health centre. These may include lifestyle management, memory groups or falls prevention.

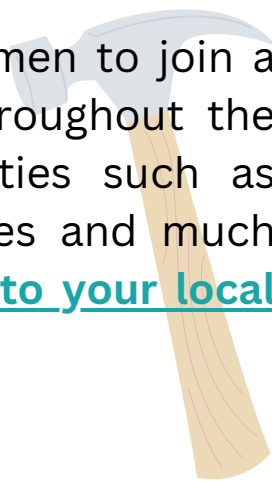
The following are examples of helpful community resources.

Libraries – local libraries provide a wide range of services beyond books, offering social, learning and cultural groups. Pop down to your local library to join and check out what they have running. [Visit the national website here](#)

Walking Groups – most local areas will have a walking group, these have been growing in numbers over the last few years. Get Ireland Walking is a national initiative to support people to get out and about walking in the fresh air. Visit [this link to their website](#) for information on where to find your local walking group.



Men's Sheds – This is a great opportunity for men to join a social active group, there are Men's Sheds throughout the country and each provide a range of activities such as gardening, woodwork, community work, lectures and much more. [You can find more information and link to your local Men's Shed here.](#)



Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) – ARI is a voluntary national organisation that engages in activities aimed at keeping older people active and well. ARI are a great way of meeting other people and engaging in interesting activities. You can find your local ARI and more information [at this website.](#)

Volunteer Ireland – Volunteering can be a great way to support your local community and rewarding. Volunteer Ireland can connect you with local charities, community projects, and more. You can find opportunities based on your skill or interest. [Find out more at their website here.](#)

If you're interested in joining a group or club but find it challenging to find one in your area, your doctor or healthcare professional may be able to refer you to a Social Prescriber who can meet with you to find a group that suits you and your needs.

Talk to your doctor to learn more about Social Prescribing or visit the HSE website [at this link.](#)

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Healthy Body and a Healthy Mind

By adapting a healthy lifestyle and useful strategies we can help improve our everyday function.

Exercise will release endorphins the body's natural happy chemicals. It will release pent up energy and stress and improve your wellbeing. As a result, mood is lifted and alertness is increased

Ensure you have a well balanced and healthy diet. Try to plan your meals in advance, and make shopping lists (Use a whiteboard for this).

Allocate time each evening, week and month to organise and prepare for your hobbies and healthy meals.



Keeping Your Mind Active

Daily workouts for the mind can keep your brain fit. You should look at ways you can incorporate a stimulating activity into your daily routine.

Word puzzles, jigsaws, board games, cards and many more are a great way to focus and workout parts of your brain involved in memory, attention, problem solving, and spatial awareness.

Find one you enjoy and make sure it is a good challenge e.g. a jigsaw with 1000 pieces might be too difficult and a jigsaw of 50 pieces too easy; find the right fit that is achievable yet challenging!

If you are a smart phone user there are some daily brain training apps available such as Mind Mate, Luminosity and Elevate.

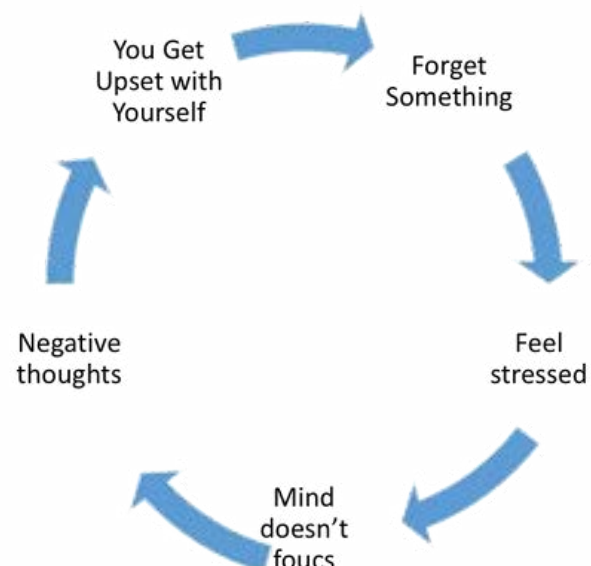
[Click here for brain training apps](#)

Mental Wellbeing

Learning to manage stress and negative thoughts will help us focus and remember things better.

Mindfulness is also known as brain training. It helps people cope with stress change and uncertainty. With practice it allows us to have more time living in the moment. This in turn will improve our attention and concentration, supporting the ability to store information more effectively.

By practicing mindfulness we can avoid falling into negative thought cycles.





Sleeping

Disturbed sleeping patterns can have an adverse affect on cognitive function. It is vital to have adequate sleep to optimise your attention and working memory.

Top Tips

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Ensure a quiet dark bedroom.
- Regular routine of going to bed and waking up.
- Relaxation techniques (use apps or youtube for guided relaxation exercises)
- Reduce fluid intake at night (but ensure you are hydrated).



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Links and Resources

Downloads

Print off the following sheets and
use as you need





Daily Planner

Plan what you need and want to do

Tick when
complete

Day: _____

	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Notes

Weekly Schedule

Print off and use as needed



Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Activity Requirements

Print off and use as needed

What activity do I want to complete?

What do I need to complete the activity

1	☐	2	☐
3	☐	4	☐
5	☐	6	☐
7	☐	8	☐

What are the steps involved in the activity

1	☐
2	☐
3	☐
4	☐
5	☐
6	☐
7	☐
8	☐
9	☐
10	☐
11	☐

Keeping a Diary



- A diary can be a great support for remembering future arrangements, appointments, birthdays etc. Known as your **Prospective Memory**
- It can also be a helpful resource for your memory, to look back on what you did yesterday or last week; this can help with memory recall. This is known as **Retrospective Memory**
- There are different formats of diaries and each person will have their own preference i.e. A4 or A5 Full week diaries or full day diaries
- A full week diary can have advantages to see at a glance what is coming up and what has been done
- Keep your diary in a place where you can leave it open and check in on regularly
- Write in important dates at the beginning of the year or each month
- Establishing any new system to support your memory will take practice and consistent use in order to form a habit
 - At the beginning of each year or month fill in any important dates
 - Add in appointments as soon as you make them
 - At the beginning of each week add in things you want to do e.g. call a friend, go to garden centre, make appointment etc.
 - Each morning check your diary to make sure you haven't forgotten something
 - Try to write something in for each day even if it is after the event e.g. if someone calls to the house

Adapting Your Smart Phones and Tablet Information and Strategy Sheet

Simplifying your screen

The interface (screen layout and design) of a smartphone can be busy and confusing. These are a few simple tips to simplify your screen:

- Deleting apps that are never used.
- Apps that are used in the background, such as find my phone, can be grouped together and moved to a folder and kept on a different screen. This will ensure the apps regularly used will be clearer and more accessible for the user.
- Sometimes we have too many notifications popping up on our screen. This may cause confusion and frustration. Consider turning off notifications.

Enhancing your screen

Once you have organised the apps on the main screen you can make some adjustments to improve their visibility and enhance accessibility. Almost all smart phones and tablets have an easy mode or accessibility in their settings app. Please ensure you view how this looks to ensure adjustments are clear. Each phone will be different but generally the following can be adjusted:

- **Text Size** – you can increase the size of the text on the screen making it easier to see and read.
- **Bold Text** – you can also change the text to be **bold** which can support visibility
- **Colour Contrast** – this too can help visibility of text and apps, in the accessible mode you can select strong contrasts, this will help the apps stand out and will support visibility.
- **Background Images and Wallpaper** – make sure the image in the background supports visibility, some images can make it hard to find the app icon on the screen.
- **Display and Brightness** - here you can increase the brightness of the screen to an appropriate amount, a dull screen can affect the visibility.

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➤ Interface App



Instead of making the changes above you can purchase an app that will adapt the interface of the phone to be more accessible; please note this has not been trialled by the MTRR and is only available on Android phones. The **Big Launcher** is available for Android through the app store it replaces your current screen with one that is visually supportive and accessible. For more information please view <http://biglauncher.com/>

Simplify Making a Call

Accessing your phones contacts to make a phone call can sometimes be a challenge. These are a few simple ideas to help ensure success finding a contact:

- Ensure that your phone app is clearly visible on the home screen.
- Delete contacts that are not used.
- Adding your most important and most used contacts to your favourites list to make it easier to find contacts.
- Adding photos to your contacts can also help and make it easier to find the contact.
- You can display an individual contact with their image on your home screen making it quick and easy to make a call. How to do this varies between phone brands and models, but most have this feature.

Additional Supports on your Device

- **Sounds and Alerts** – all phones will have a sound to alert you to a call, message etc. Vibrate may also be supportive for a person who has a hearing problem. Some phones will flash a light to alert you to a notification such as a text message, view these in your settings
- **Reminders on your phone-** to remind you to take your medication or an appointments etc. **Tip:** at the beginning of the week or month schedule in known appointments, birthdays, bin days etc. If you need help ask a family member to support you.

- **Use the micro phone** in messages to dictate your message! Or you can send a voice message through text.
- **Notes** – use notes to jot down items to remember, or something you want to recall for a later time
- **Voice Activating** – Most phones have a voice activating feature such as Siri for Apple phones or “Ok Google” on Android phones use this to set a reminder or ask what the weather is like and much more.
- **Hearing** – most phones have supports for hearing, such as noise cancellation or hearing aid compatibility

Widgets

Widgets are displays on your phone or tablet computer which can be; icons, or toggles, or pop up reminders etc. You can add widgets such as a contact to your home screen or a webpage you use frequently.

Add Widgets on your iPhone

<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207122>

1. From the Home Screen, touch and hold a widget or an empty area until the apps jiggle.
2. Tap the Add button **+** in the upper-left corner.
3. Select a widget, choose from three widget sizes, then tap Add Widget.

You can add contacts, calendar, clock or any of the apps you use regularly and want to see larger on your screen. If added a person's contact directly to the screen you should add a photo of the person's contact



Photo 1 has individual contacts with images, a large clock and calendar view of the day, date and scheduled appointment.

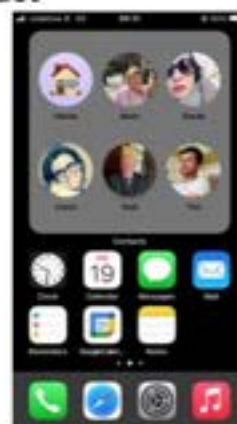


Photo 2 has a group of 6 contacts with photos to help identify the contact, and the regularly used apps are on this screen.

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Add Widgets on Your Android Phone

<https://support.google.com/android/answer/9450271?hl=en>

1. On a Home screen, touch and hold an empty space.
2. Tap Widgets, on the bottom of the screen.
3. Scroll through the widgets/apps you want e.g. a contact, calendar, clock, email etc.
4. Touch and hold a widget. You'll get images of your Home screens.
5. Slide the widget to where you want it. Lift your finger.

Creating Folders on iPhones

1. Touch and hold the Home Screen background until the apps begin to jiggle.
2. To create a folder, drag an app **onto** another app, this will create the folder
3. Drag other apps into the folder.
4. To rename the folder, touch and hold it, tap Rename, then enter a new name.

To delete a folder, tap the folder to open it, then drag all the apps out of it. The folder is automatically deleted.

See examples below of; **Finance Folder**, **Health & Fitness Folder**, **Social Networking Folder** and **Utilities Folder**



Creating a Folder on your Android Phone

Similar to iPhones follow these steps;

1. Touch and hold an app or shortcut.
2. Drag that app or shortcut on top of another. Lift your finger.
 - To add more, drag each one on top of the group.
 - To name the group, tap the group and type your preferred name.

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Google Calendar

The Google calendar app can support you to schedule and plan events and appointments using your phone. Family or friends can add a reminder to their Google Calendar and share this with your Google Calendar e.g. organising a lunch date using Google Calendar. Sharing Calendars can only be done on a computer and not through the app.

Location Sharing Apps

- **Location Sharing** – under your **Google Maps** account you can select location sharing which allows you to share your real time location from your device with people that you choose. Open **Google Maps**, click on your initial in top right corner, select location sharing, and add new share through contacts.
- **Location sharing on iPhone:** Open the **Find My** app and select the People tab, Select **Share My Location** or **Start Sharing Location**. Enter the name or phone number of the person you want to **share** your **location** with, select **Send**. You can choose to **share** your **location** for One Hour, Until End of Day, or **Share Indefinitely**.

This should be discussed with all involved in accessing your location and requires the users consent to locate.

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Quick links to useful technologies and services
mentioned in this ebook



Index Apps

- [FindMyiPhone](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- [Irish Film Institute](#)
- [Lumiosity](#)
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- [Orientation Clock](#)
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- [Memory Board](#)
- [Smart Home Devices](#)
- [Talking Tiles](#)



Primary Care Team

A Primary Care Team (PCT) is a multidisciplinary group of health and social care professionals who work together to deliver local, accessible health and social services. Primary care team consists of GPs, Nurses, Home Helps, Health and Social Care Professionals i.e. occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech & language therapists, and dieticians. All the team's health care professional's work together to share information and their respective skills to ensure that patients with the greatest need receive services in a timely and coordinated way. Your GP or PHN can refer you to the necessary members of the Primary Care Team. Check in with your local primary care team to find out about groups they are running, such as lifestyle management, cognitive rehabilitation groups, falls prevention etc.

Find more information on the [HSE website](#)

Memory Clinics

Memory Clinics and assessment centres are located throughout the country and provide a specialist assessment and diagnostic service. The consultant/advanced nurse practitioner will discuss your diagnosis and the steps you should take. You may also be referred to local dementia services for more information and supports

Pharmacists

Your local pharmacist can be a support to you and offer advice and information on the medications you are taking, they can also provide medications in a blister pack which may suit your needs.

Dementia Adviser

Dementia Advisers (DAs) are part of the Alzheimer's Society team and work in the community with people living with dementia, their families and carers providing individualised advice and information. They can also link and signpost you to relevant services and resources in your area.

To find out more about Dementia Advisers and contact for your area please visit the Alzheimer's Society Website <https://alzheimer.ie/service/dementia-adviser/>

Understand Together

The National Dementia office established the Understand Together campaign which is a public support, awareness and information campaign. The website has a range of advice, information, and education on the different types of dementia. You'll also find services and supports available in your county and upcoming events. See more information at their website <https://www.understandtogether.ie/>

Memory Technology Resource Rooms

Memory Technology Resource Rooms (MTRR) have been set up by the HSE all over the country. The MTRRs have a wide range of assistive technologies on demonstration so you have the opportunity to see and try out different devices. When you visit a Memory Technology Resource Room, you will meet with the occupational therapist who will discuss with you any difficulties you are having, and provide advice on assistive technology that might help. The occupational therapist will also discuss practical strategies to promote independence, safety, and quality of life.

Find out more at <https://www.understandtogether.ie/get-support/memory-technology-resource-rooms/>

Alzheimer's Society Ireland

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the leading dementia specific service provider in Ireland. The ASI provides dementia specific services and supports and advocate for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their family carers.

The ASI website is full of information and supports available nationally and locally you can find out more on their website <https://alzheimer.ie/>

The ASI also has a dedicated helpline you can call for advice and support on [1800 341 341](tel:1800341341).

Irish Dementia Working Group

The Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) is an advocacy group of people living with dementia. The group is an independent campaigning voice for the lived experience of dementia with members throughout Ireland. The IDWG is working to improve life for people living with dementia throughout Ireland. It is a space to do something proactive and positive and bring purpose to life after diagnosis. You can find out more about the IDWG and how to become a member at <https://alzheimer.ie/creating-change/self-advocacy-groups/irish-dementia-working-group-3/>

Minding Your Memory Videos

This is a 6 part series created by occupational therapists from the Cork and Kerry Community Health service. These short videos include topics such as how your memory works, attention, driving, and practical strategies. You can find these videos on the Cork and Kerry Community Healthcare You Tube channel [here](#)

Free Dem Films

These animated films were created by Sabina Brennan of Trinity College and Trinity Brain Health. They provide public awareness around important issues of memory and brain health. The engaging films cover topics such as How Does Memory Work, Why is Attention Important, and What Can You Do to Keep Your Brain Healthy. You can find these videos at the FreeDem Living website [here](#)

South Tipperary Dementia Website

The Living Well with Dementia Service in South Tipperary have created a dedicated website to their service with resources and useful information. The services are for people living within the South Tipperary area, however the website has some useful resources available and more information on Assistive Technologies. You'll find out more about the Memory Technology Library and Resource Rooms here also. Please visit their website at www.southtipperarydementia.ie

Age Friendly Homes

Age Friendly Homes is a website that provides resources, guidance and information on housing for our ageing population and to support people to live well as they age. Here you will find information on grants and funding, healthcare, design information, and technology. For more information view their website <https://agefriendlyhomes.ie/>

Alone

Alone work with all older people, including those who are lonely, isolated, frail or ill, homeless, living in poverty, or are facing other difficulties. Alone provide an integrated system of Support Coordination, Practical Supports, Befriending, a variety of Phone Services, Social Prescribing, Housing with Support, and assistive technology. To find out more about the services Alone offer view their website <https://alone.ie/>

Age Action

Age Action is a service dedicated to older persons' to empower and supports people to live full and independent lives. They offer a range of services and supports and can link you with care and repair, technology, local services and resources. To learn more about Age Action please visit their website <https://www.ageaction.ie/>

Citizen's Information

Citizen's Information provides comprehensive information on public services and on the entitlements of citizens in Ireland. Their website has been specially designed around the needs of users for those times in life when you need information about your rights and how to apply for State services in Ireland. You can find all of the information and relevant links at their website <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/> or Phone Service 0818 07 4000

Free Legal Aid Centres (FLAC)

FLAC is an independent voluntary organisation that aims to promote equal access to justice for everybody. FLAC provides advice & information to help people to understand and access their legal rights. FLAC offer phone advice clinics that are a free confidential service that may provide the following; first stop assistance, basic legal information, advice - such as the next steps you need to take and referral- to another appropriate and relevant service. Find out more on their website <https://www.flac.ie/>

Sage Advocacy

Sage advocacy is a national organisation that provides free independent advocacy and support services to older people, adults who may be vulnerable and healthcare patients. The Sage advocacy team throughout the country will support you to ensure your voice is heard, to express your views and wishes, and to participate in decisions that affect you. You can find more information at <https://www.sageadvocacy.ie/>

Walking Groups

There are a range of walking groups in most local areas, which is great for health and well-being. Get Ireland Walking is a national initiative that aims to maximise the number of people participating in walking - for health, wellbeing and fitness - throughout Ireland. Their website provides detail of local walking groups, to find out more you can view their website at <https://www.getirelandwalking.ie/>

Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres in Ireland. They work to support, promote and celebrate volunteering. Volunteering can be a great way to contribute towards your local community and provide opportunities for engagement and achievement. There are 29 Volunteer Centre across the country who work with Volunteer Ireland, to find out more visit <https://www.volunteer.ie/>

Irish Libraries

Irish public libraries offer a wide range of services online and in local libraries. Check out your local library to find what groups they run, cultural and historical activities as well as a range of resources. The national libraries website will provide more information, view at <https://www.librariesireland.ie/>

Men's Shed

A 'men's shed' is a community based project, where men can come together to learn, share skills and make long-lasting friendships together. All sheds are independent and provide a range of activities, most sheds engage in activities such as woodwork, gardening, carpentry and community work. There are over 450 sheds in Ireland, with at least 10,000 men visiting a shed every week. To find out more and to link with your local men's shed view their website <https://menssheds.ie/>

Active Retirement

Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) is a voluntary organisation for older people. All the activities are aimed at keeping older people active and well. Active Retirement Associations are a great way of meeting other people and engaging in interesting activities. To find out about joining a group in your local area visit their website <https://activeirl.ie/>

Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA)

The ICA is the largest women's association in Ireland, with 8,000 members and over 440 Guilds across the Country. The ICA cook, travel, craft and socialise! The aims of the ICA is to provide a welcoming and fun organisation which offers support, friendship, personal development, education and lifelong learning. Members regularly learn new skills, participate in local charity initiatives and get involved in their local communities. To find out more and to join the ICA please visit their website at <https://www.ica.ie/>

Meet the Team



Emma O'Brien is a senior occupational therapist who has been working with the Memory Technology Library in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary since 2015.

Emma facilitates memory rehab programme and one to one appointments providing advice on assistive technologies and practical solutions.

Emma has an MSc in Dementia in Healthcare and provides clinical leadership to the national Memory Technology Resource Rooms.



Kerri Malone has 15 years experience as a Senior Occupational Therapist in Primary Care.

In 2016 Kerri was part of the working group in the development of "flourishing with dementia" which is a HSE and Genio funded initiative. The aim of this project was aimed to meet the specific needs of people living with complex dementia related challenges.

Kerri has developed and facilitated a Cognitive Rehabilitation Group for clients in County Louth to support people to manage their memory difficulties.

Meet the Team



Orla Mc Donnell has 15 years experience as a Senior Occupational Therapist in Primary Care. Orla has developed and facilitated a Cognitive Rehabilitation Group for clients in County Louth to support people to manage their memory difficulties.

Orla also completed a 6 month pilot project with the M-Power Team researching how the use of technology can support people living with dementia. During this time Orla assessed and advised on specific technologies to meet the individual needs of both the person living with dementia and their carer.



Kate Hanlon is a multimedia specialist who has been working in eHealth and Disruptive Technologies since 2020.

Kate produces a range of media forms, including e-books, videos, animations, graphics, e-learning programmes and the podcast series 'eHealth Presents'.

Kate has a BSc in Multimedia from Dublin City University and and a MA in Animation from Ulster University.



eHealth and Disruptive Technologies
HSE Occupational Therapy