



Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital  
Psychogeriatric Team



# THE NEWHABIT TIPS



FOR PERSONS WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT  
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS (2020 EDITION)





# Table of Content

Preface	2
<b>Mild Cognitive Impairment:</b>	
What you need to know and how to start early prevention	3
<b>The NewHABIT Programme: Fighting “dementia” together</b>	4
<b>"H" Establish HEALTHY lifestyle habits</b>	
<b>NewHABIT Nutrition:</b> What kinds of foods can promote brain health?	5
<b>NewHABIT Exercise:</b> What kinds of exercise enhance cognitive functioning?	8
<b>NewHABIT Activities:</b> Which types of activities can enhance brain function?	10
<b>NewHABIT Stress Management:</b> Can relaxation exercise really improve concentration?	11
<b>"A" Take ACTION to change</b>	
<b>NewHABIT Communication:</b>	
What can you do to improve your communication skills?	12
<b>"B" Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions</b>	
<b>NewHABIT Knowledge:</b>	
Is “Absentmindedness” the same as “Dementia”?	14
How can we differentiate between “Absentmindedness”, “Mild Cognitive Impairment” and “Dementia”?	16
<b>NewHABIT Medication:</b> What medications are currently used to delay the deterioration of cognitive functioning?	17
<b>NewHABIT Strategies:</b> Can memory be improved?	18
<b>NewHABIT Games:</b> How can technological resources assist in patients' daily living and maintain cognitive function?	20
<b>"I" Enhance INDEPENDENCY</b>	
<b>NewHABIT Self-autonomy:</b> How to begin Lifestyle Redesign Intervention?	21
<b>"T" Caregiver TRAINING and support</b>	
<b>NewHABIT Interactions:</b> How can caregivers relieve stress?	22
<b>NewHABIT Resource Support:</b> How to find “Mild Cognitive Impairment” and “Dementia” support service?	24

## Preface

The rapidly ageing population of Hong Kong has resulted in an increasing interest on the part of elderly citizens concerning factors that affect cognitive ability, as well as an enhanced fear that they may be experiencing symptoms of cognitive impairment. According to recent study findings, approximately 20% of elderly people aged 60 or above reported deterioration in memory, scoring lower on measures of memory compared to others of the same age and education level. However, despite these impairments in memory, these older adults still reported being able to complete simple daily tasks, placing them in the category of “mild cognitive impairment.” The proportion of older adults experiencing mild cognitive impairments increases significantly, with approximately 40% of citizens 85 years and over experiencing these impairments. If elderly people were able to change habits to boost cognitive functioning at an earlier stage, adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors, reduce the frequency of negative thought patterns, they might be able to delay the progression of cognitive impairments, thus reducing the prevalence of dementia. It can therefore be seen that early recognition and intervention of signs of cognitive impairment and efforts to mitigate its effects is crucial for patients who are already struggling with mild cognitive impairment.

Psychogeriatric Team of the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital has made consistent efforts to provide educational opportunities on the topic of dementia to the Hong Kong community. In 2014, our team developed the “Caring for the Elderly: A Caregiver’s Manual”, helping elderly patients at the hospital as well as their caregivers better understand the nature of dementia and available community support resources. Our team also introduced “The NewHABIT Programme” in 2014 which was a resounding success, helping patients affected by “mild cognitive impairment” or the “early stage of dementia” and their caregivers access the support that they needed, and connect them to regional social service organizations. Using the rich body of knowledge and experience from our team, we were proud to present the booklet, **“The NewHABIT Tips”**, in 2018. The booklet was filled with tips on how patients and their caregivers to detect and delay cognitive decline. Since the publication of its first edition, the booklet of 2,000 copies had almost been taken up within a year. Such a result is very encouraging to our team, we worked even harder to prepare for the revised edition in 2020.



# Mild cognitive impairment: What you need to know and how to start early prevention

**“Mild cognitive impairment”** is the transitional stage between “normal ageing” and “dementia”. Studies show that the incidence of “mild cognitive impairment” in individuals ages 60 and above is between 3 and 19%, with rates increasing sharply to reach 42% in patients aged 85. Moreover, studies have shown that close to half of this group of patients are diagnosed with “dementia”, 3-6 years after they show symptoms of “mild cognitive impairment”. Statistics indicate that approximately 10 to 15% of affected individuals have transitioned from “mild cognitive impairment” to clinically diagnosed “dementia” annually, which is 5 to 10 times the incidence of which healthy elderly individuals. As can be seen from the aforementioned figures, there is an intricate link between the conditions of “mild cognitive impairment” and “dementia”.

## Characteristics of “mild cognitive impairment”

1. Frequent complaints about memory decline (base on the patient or family members)
2. Little to no disruptions in general cognitive ability
3. Comparatively worse performance on measures of memory compared to individuals of similar age and education level
4. Ability to complete everyday life tasks with minimal disruptions
5. Not formally diagnosed with “dementia”

Research shows that engaging in educational opportunities about cognition (such as learning tips, knowledge about cognitive functioning, and suggested ways to implement this knowledge into daily life) and carrying out a healthy lifestyle (such as exercising, eating healthfully and engaging in social interactions) can serve to delay the cognitive deterioration of elderly people diagnosed with “mild cognitive impairment”, which can in turn decrease the incidence of “dementia”. Thus, it can be seen that early diagnosis of “mild cognitive impairment” is of the utmost importance.

# The NewHABIT Programme: Fighting "Dementia" Together

In 2014, the Psychogeriatric Team at the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital introduced **"The NewHABIT Programme"** to serve patients aged 60 years and above who are affected by "mild cognitive impairment" and "early-stage dementia" and their caregivers. If patients and their caregivers wish to participate in the programme, they can contact their responsible psychiatrists for inquiries and referrals. (The program is conducted in Cantonese only)

## Recruitment criteria for The NewHABIT Programme:

Patient must be aged 60 or above with a formal diagnosis of "mild cognitive impairment" or "early-stage dementia", and must be an active patient at the Department of Psychiatry in the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital  
Patient has reported persistent memory decline for over half a year.  
Caregivers are willing to attend at least 3 small-group sessions.

**The NewHABIT Programme** provides weekly small-group sessions (each lasting approximately 1.5 hours) for a duration of 12 weeks. The sessions will be delivered by 7 different professionals well-versed in the field of cognition, helping patients and caregivers achieve a holistic understanding of the diagnoses of "mild cognitive impairment" and "early-stage dementia" and how they can implement effective everyday strategies to manage their conditions. After the completion of these small-group sessions, affected individuals can receive referrals from medical social workers to participate in educational opportunities provided by District Elderly Community Centres (DECC).

## Focus of the NewHABIT Programme

- H** Healthy Lifestyle
- A** Take Action to change
- B** Enhancement of Brain functions
- I** Independent Living
- T** Carer Training



# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

## NewHABIT nutrition: What kind of food can promote brain health?

Optimal brain functioning requires plentiful supply of nutrients. Remember that you can live life with energy if you are well-nourished! When your brain is deprived of nutrients, you may experience cognitive fatigue, attention deficits and deterioration of memory. Thus, healthy eating habits are crucial in providing the brain with sufficient nutrition. Every food has its unique nutritional value, elderly people should base on their eating habits on the food pyramid, making sure to incorporate a variety of foods into their diet in order to keep their brains and bodies well-nourished.





# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

The table below shows brain-boosting food tips:

Food Category	Nutrients	Functions and Characteristics	Examples
<b>Grains</b>	Carbohydrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Main source of energy</li></ul>	Rice, congee, noodle, pasta, biscuit, bread, potato, sweet potato, corn, carrots etc. 
<b>Meats and alternatives</b>	Protein Red meat and soya bean are high in iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protein plays a significant role in supporting brain cells to perform speech, thought and memory functions</li><li>Protein also aids in metabolic function and immune system</li></ul>	Meat, fish, seafood, egg, tofu, legumes etc. 
<b>Marine fish</b>	Omega-3 fatty acids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Omega 3 fatty acid has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, which can reduce the chance of blood clotting and help to prevent atherosclerosis</li></ul>	Salmon, sardines, golden thread etc. 



# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

Fruits and vegetables	Fiber	Soluble fiber helps to reduce the level of “bad” cholesterol and reduce the risk of developing vascular dementia.	Vegetables, melons, beans, mushrooms, fruits, dried fruits etc. 
	Vitamins	Regular consumption of high antioxidant foods, including vegetables, fruit and nuts (rich in vitamins A, C, E), can prevent degeneration of brain cells  The vitamin B complex (including vitamin B6, folic acid and vitamin B12) can prevent the onset of dementia related to vitamin B deficiencies	<b>Foods containing folic acid:</b> Dark leafy greens such as spinach and choy sum; fruits such as kiwi and orange  <b>Foods containing vitamins B12 and B6:</b> Beans and legumes; meat and poultry 
Dairy products	Vitamin B complex and calcium	Vitamin B12 can prevent dementia	Skimmed milk and low fat cheese 

# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

## NewHABIT Exercise: What kinds of exercise enhance cognitive functioning?

Regular exercise is crucial for enhancing mental and physical health in patients affected by “mild cognitive impairment” and “early-stage of dementia.” Through engaging in regular exercise, patients can delay the deterioration of cognitive ability and maintain physical mobility.

### Benefits of exercise

- Increase cognitive function:
  - Increase blood flow to the brain
  - Increase hippocampal capacity; improve memory and attention span
- Improve function of cardiopulmonary system
- Prevent osteoporosis
- Enhance immune function
- Improve balance and reduce incidence of falling
- Improve sleep quality
- Promote relaxation and improve mood
- Improve self-image and increase self confidence

### Types of exercise

<p><b>Aerobic exercise</b> Recommended frequency: 5 days a week, 30 minutes each time</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive, rhythmic movement of large muscle groups.</li> <li>• Continuous movement</li> <li>• Results in an increase in respiration rate, heart rate and perspiration rate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Standing aerobic exercises: Walking, hiking, dancing, Taichi, Qigong.</li> <li>■ Sitting aerobic exercises: Taichi movements in sitting position, cycling.</li> <li>■ Others: Swimming.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strength training</b> Recommended frequency: 3 sets of 10-15 repetitions for each muscle group.</p> 	<p>Strengthening muscles through weight-bearing exercises Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dumbbell exercises</li> <li>■ Kickboxing</li> <li>■ Grip strength exercises</li> </ul> <p><b>*Technique tips:</b> Exhale during muscle contraction, inhale during muscle relaxation. Stop immediately if pain is experienced.</p>



# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

<p><b>Exercises to enhance flexibility</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HOW-TO: Slowly extend muscles until you feel tension, then hold for 10-20 seconds. You should NOT feel any pain during stretching.</li><li>• Suggested muscle groups to stretch: Neck, arms, shoulders, waist, thighs, hamstrings, calves etc.</li><li>• Technique tips:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ After completing the stretch, relax the muscle slowly.</li><li>■ Try to avoid sudden, jerky movements (which may be harmful to the joints)</li><li>■ Maintain a steady pattern of breathing and don't hold your breath.</li><li>■ Try to work up to 3 sets of stretching exercises for each muscle group.</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Exercises to enhance balance</b></p> 	<p>Suggested exercise #1: Tiptoe stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support yourself with your hands on a stable surface (e.g., the back of a chair)</li><li>• Stand on your tiptoes with your heels off the ground.</li><li>• Maintain your balance for 5-10 seconds.</li></ul>
<p><b>Exercises to enhance balance</b></p> 	<p>Suggested exercise #2: Single-leg stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support yourself with your hands on a stable surface (e.g., the back of a chair)</li><li>• Alternate between standing on just the left leg and just the right leg.</li><li>• Maintain your balance for 5-10 seconds.</li></ul>

## Tips for exercise:

- Choose a form of exercise that you enjoy, so that you can effortlessly make it a habit.
- Formulate a structured exercise plan that is appropriate for your ability level.
- Encourage your family and friends to exercise with you, and create a supportive environment for movement.
- Listen to music while exercising.
- Get outside and enjoy nature! Look for nearby parks that provide free exercise facilities and equipment.
- Try to increase activity level in daily life:
  - Take the stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
  - Get off at an earlier bus stop and walk to your destination.

# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

## NewHABIT Activities: Which types of activities can enhance brain function?

Numerous studies in recent years have shown that individual affected by “mild cognitive impairment” can delay cognitive deterioration by regularly participating in various leisure activity groups to stimulate cognitive function. As such, individuals affected by “mild cognitive impairment” should take advantage of activities provided by the District Elderly Community Centres (DECC) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NEC), which can also help expand their social circles and introduce them to new interests and hobbies.

### Examples of activities

1. **Games that boost cognitive function:** Mahjong, card games, chess games etc.
2. **Knowledge-enhancing activities:** Reading, sketching, calligraphy or other leisure activity groups topics.
3. **Physical exercise:** Taichi, dance, aerobics, swimming etc.
4. **Expansion of social circles:** Frequent social gatherings with friends
5. **Participation in volunteer work** to enhance knowledge about the surrounding community





# H: Establishing HEALTHY lifestyle habits

## NewHABIT Stress Management: Can relaxation exercise really improve concentration?

When we are stressed, the sympathetic nerve in our autonomic nervous system will exhibit a “fight or flight” response. Research shows that long-term exposure to stress results in attention deficits and an impaired ability to focus. Stress has also been found to have adverse effects on the hippocampus, the region of our brain that is responsible for learning and memory. As such, learning effective strategies to manage stress can help improve the attention spans and learning abilities of individuals affected by “mild cognitive impairment” and “early-stage dementia”.

This table describes symptoms of the “fight or flight” response resulting from prolonged exposure to stress:

Physical symptoms	Emotional symptoms	Mental symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Increased heart rate</li><li>• Muscles contracted</li><li>• Increased blood pressure</li><li>• Poor digestion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nervousness</li><li>• Depressed mood</li><li>• Loss of motivation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty in focusing</li><li>• Shortened attention span</li><li>• Negative thought</li><li>• Indecisiveness</li></ul>

“**Diaphragmatic breathing**” is an effective relaxation technique which can help calm an overexcited “sympathetic nervous system” by slowing heart rate and relaxing tight muscles. Long-term practice of this technique can help activate the “parasympathetic nervous system”, which is responsible for the restorative functions of the body, such as digestion and sleep. The steps for practicing this technique are described below:

- Choose a quiet place to sit or lie down.
- Put your hands on your stomach area.
- Exhale air through your mouth, feeling your diaphragm deflate.
- Inhale air slowly through your nose, feeling your diaphragm expand.
- Practice this technique for 10-20 minutes daily.

# A: Take ACTION to change

## NewHABIT Communication: What can you do to improve your communication skills?

Due to the cognitive deterioration that occurs in patients with “mild cognitive impairment” and “early-stage dementia”, their communication skills may be comparatively worse than other individuals of their age. Below, we recommend some best practices for communication.

The table below describes characteristics of patient, caregiver and surrounding environment that may affect communication:

Patient characteristics	Caregiver characteristics	Environmental characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deterioration of the five senses (sight, smell, hearing, tasting, touch)</li> <li>• Deterioration of brain function</li> <li>• Mood swings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge in caretaking of patient and patience</li> <li>• Misunderstanding of patient’s needs</li> <li>• Overwhelmed by own emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many distractions (e.g., environment is too noisy, impaired functions of hearing aid)</li> <li>• Unfamiliar environment</li> </ul>





# A: Take ACTION to change

This table describes ways that caregivers can work to overcome the aforementioned obstacles:

Caregivers' attitude	Conversation content	Other tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approach the patient with compassion, patience and understanding.</li><li>• Try to understand the underlying reasons behind the patient's communication difficulties</li><li>• Encourage patients to express themselves more often.</li><li>• Try to minimize conflicts with patients.</li><li>• Use an endearing, calm tone when speaking.</li><li>• Try not to become frustrated when things do not go as planned – stay optimistic and be open to trying new strategies/ techniques.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try to tailor the content of conversations to the comprehension level of the patient.</li><li>• Address the patient and introduce yourself before starting a conversation.</li><li>• Use simple and straightforward language</li><li>• Use concrete terms and try to avoid using pronouns (he/ she/it).</li><li>• Try to focus on conveying one main message in each sentence.</li><li>• Use yes/no questions and provide answer choices whenever possible. Minimize the use of open-ended questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct conversations in environments with minimal distractions and/or noise whenever possible.</li><li>• Consider purchasing hearing and/or visual aids for patients with impaired abilities.</li><li>• Make use of images and concrete objects to convey messages.</li><li>• Make use of reminder notes/ memos for patients who are comfortable with reading.</li><li>• Provide patient with opportunities to interact with the outside world (e.g., encourage interactions between patients and their relatives and friends to maintain their communication skills) .</li><li>• Use body language to complement verbal message (e.g., hold the patient's hand when conversing with them, to increase their focus and enhance their sense of safety).</li></ul>

# **B:** Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

## **NewHABIT Knowledge: Is "Absentmindedness" the same as "Dementia"?**

Many elderly adults have expressed similar concerns about their memory, including:  
Am I becoming forgetful because of my old age?  
Does increasing forgetfulness eventually lead to a diagnosis of "dementia"?  
Will my forgetfulness become a significant problem for me and my family members?

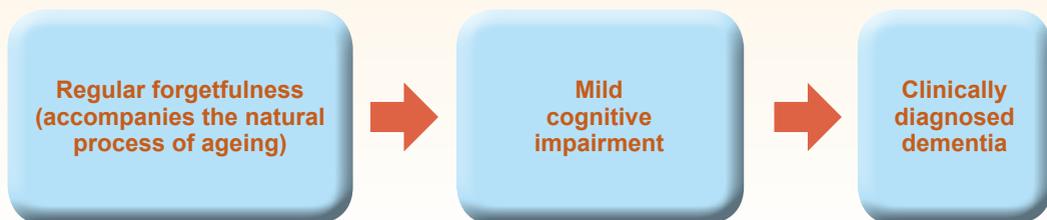
A significant portion of elderly adults aged 70 and above begin to notice deteriorations in memory and other cognitive abilities that do not significantly impact their daily living. They may consider their increased forgetfulness as one of the normal processes. The memory abilities of elderly adults can be affected by many different factors, such as physical health status, emotional stressors, sleep quality, and negative thought patterns. Typically, the increased forgetfulness that is involved in the natural process of ageing does not necessarily lead to a diagnosis of "dementia".

For example, if you find that you have temporarily forgotten information that is recalled at a later time (e.g., forgetting what you ate for lunch, but remembering a few hours later), you do not need to be overly concerned. However, if the elderly person and their family members frequently make complaints about the increasing forgetfulness, if the elderly person scores lower than other individuals of the same age on measures of memory and other cognitive abilities (despite being able to carry out daily life activities, such as communicating their thoughts to others and making decisions), they may be affected by symptoms of "mild cognitive impairment".



# B: Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

**When to consult a mental health professional:** If the elderly person and their family members find that the elderly person is beginning to forget large portions of past occurrences, is experiencing significant declines in decision making (e.g., experiencing difficulties in choosing items when shopping, taking a train in the opposite direction of where they are supposed to be going.) and/or is experiencing disturbances to daily life activities (e.g., forgetting how to adjust water temperature in the shower or forgetting to change their clothes).



LOW

HIGH

Level of severity / level of impact on daily life

# B: Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

## How can we differentiate between "Absentmindedness", "Mild Cognitive Impairment" and "Dementia"?

Absentmindedness	Mild Cognitive Impairment	Clinically diagnosed Dementia
Experiences temporary loss of memory about recent events (recalled after a brief period of time); can still remember events that occurred a long time ago.	Needs reminders from others in order to remember details of recent events	Near-immediate loss of memory of recent events; inability to recall memories from long ago; may sometimes even forget names of family members.
Difficulties in verbalizing thoughts (despite knowing the content in their minds) sometimes.	Frequent instances where person is unable to verbalize thoughts and/or use appropriate language to express thoughts.	Significant challenges in verbalizing thoughts and incomprehension of information (e.g., inability to understand the content of television shows).
Judgment ability is unaffected; capable of handling complex tasks (e.g., withdrawing money from a bank account)	Judgment ability is mostly unaffected, but person may experience difficulties in carrying out complex tasks.	Significant decrease in judgment abilities; inability to carry out simple life tasks.
Able to tell time, orient oneself and travel independently.	Abilities to tell time, orient oneself and travel independently are mostly unaffected, but person will occasionally get lost when travelling alone.	Loss of ability to tell time and to orient oneself; may sometimes get lost in familiar places.
Independence in daily life is unaffected.	Independence in daily life is unaffected.	Inability to maintain independence in daily life; person may become dependent on others to clothe and feed themselves.



# B: Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

## NewHABIT medication: What medications are currently used to delay the deterioration of cognitive functioning?

Recent studies have failed to show beneficial effects of any forms of medication for “mild cognitive impairment”. Conversely, most studies suggest that these medications have produced adverse side effects in patients, such as headaches, nausea, diarrhea and vomiting, to name a few.

Medications for patients diagnosed with early and moderate stage of “dementia” show more promise, and have been shown to improve short-term memory capacity, decrease symptoms of wavering attention span and focus, and help maintain the patient’s ability to carry out daily life activities. If patients begin to experience symptoms of depression, mental health practitioners may prescribe anti-depressant medications to mitigate mood fluctuations and manage depressive symptoms.

Commonly used medications for delaying onset of “dementia” symptoms	Who should take it and how much to take
<p><b>Donepezil (Aricept)</b></p>	<p>For patients diagnosed with “early and moderate stage of dementia”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comes in pill-form</li> <li>• Recommended dosage: One time per day (typically in the evening)</li> <li>• Each pill typically contains 5mg of medication; dosage may be adjusted based on the severity of the patient’s symptoms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rivastigmine (Exelon)</b></p>	<p>For patients diagnosed with early and moderate stage of dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comes in capsule or patch form.</li> <li>• Recommended dosage: Two times per day.</li> <li>• Each pill typically contains 3mg of medication; dosage may be adjusted based on the severity of the patient’s symptoms.</li> <li>• Patches can be replaced once per day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Galantamine (Remyinyl)</b></p>	<p>For patients diagnosed with early and moderate stage of dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comes in capsule form</li> <li>• Pills may contain 8mg, 16mg or 24mg of dosage; patients should start by taking an 8mg dosage per day, and adjust dosage based on severity of symptoms.</li> </ul>



**B:**

## Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

### NewHABIT Strategies: Can memory be improved?

In order to understand how you can improve your memory span, you must first understand how our brain functions to help us remember things! Here is a diagram that explains the memory processes that go on in our brain:

#### Diagram

1. Event occurs in the outside world
2. Reception of information about this event  
(Opportunity for memory loss)
3. Short-term memory  
(Opportunity for memory loss)
4. Long-term memory

The rapid development of information technology in the current era means that people of all ages are increasingly exposed to new information at almost every second of every day. If elderly individuals are unable to focus their attention on certain pieces of information, they may fail to retain them in their memory, highlighting the integral role of attention in memory storage. If elderly individuals are hoping to increase their memory span, they must first practice paying attention to information in their surroundings, and make conscious efforts to process and retain this information. These intentionally retained memories are separated into two types:

1. **Short-term memory:** Lasts about 30-45 seconds, capacity is approximately  $7 \pm 2$  digits (e.g., length of a phone number)
2. **Long-term memory:** Capacity is unlimited.

Without frequent practice, elderly individuals may begin to forget past events or mix up the details of different past events.

Thus, it is crucial that elderly people make efforts to implement “**brain-boosting habits**” in order to improve their cognitive abilities. Here are a few examples of these habits:

- Noting down the dates of medical appointments and/or important reminders in your diary or smartphone
- Placing frequently used objects in easily accessible pockets of your bag
- Making a “To-bring List” that can be ticked off before we leave the house
- Categorizing the items on our shopping list (e.g., meats, vegetables, grains) before heading to the supermarket



# B:

## Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

Besides making changes to their habits, elderly people should also try to change their attitudes towards their memory capacities. Many elderly individuals who are diagnosed with “mild cognitive impairment” or “early stage dementia” worry about their abilities, and may express sentiments such as:

“I forget this every time!”

“I can’t believe that I can’t even remember this simple thing, darn it!”

“I have the worst memory out of all of my friends!”

Elderly individuals should try to minimize these cognitive distortions which can result in persistent negative mood. Here are a few ways to reverse these thought patterns:

- “I forget this every time” → “These memory lapses are not as frequent as I lead myself to believe, and I can definitely improve my memory by using the brain-boosting techniques that I have learned!”
- “I can’t believe that I can’t even remember this simple thing, dame it!” → This situation is really not as bad as it seems - let me explore ways to improve my memory!”
- “I have the worst memory out of all my friends” → “Is this really the case? Everyone forgets things sometimes!”

By simply focusing their attention on one task at a time, putting effort into incorporating brain-boosting habits into their daily lives and replacing cognitive distortions with more positive ones, elderly individuals may be able to significantly improve their memory spans and cognitive abilities.



# B:

## Adopt habits to maintain and enhance BRAIN functions

### NewHABIT Games: How can technological resources assist in patients' daily living and maintain cognitive function?

In the era with advanced technology, tablets, smartphones and the internet can be easily assessed. These technological resources can assist individuals' daily living and maintain their cognition if we utilize them effectively.

#### Assist in daily living:

Caregivers and patients can acquire information related to “mild cognitive impairment” and caring advice easily on internet. Moreover, Medication Reminder App can assist patients to manage their medications and maintain drug compliance regularly and independently.

#### Maintain / improve brain function:

Researches have demonstrated that cognitive games with gradating difficulty can maintain cognition or improve various brain functions significantly. Most of the cognitive games are accessible from the internet and smartphones. Besides, interactive cognitive games can promote interaction within the family, thus facilitating closer relationship.

Below are some commonly-used apps for patients with “mild cognitive impairment”:

Name of application	Developers	Place to download
 Mr. Pillster	Whisper Arts	 
 Six Art @ Fun App	Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association	Ipad App(Not supported on devices with iOS 11 or later) 
 e-Elders	Haven of Hope Christian Service	
 Brain Friends navigation	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals – Social Welfare Services Eastern/Central & Western District Office	
 BrainyApp	Alzheimer's Australia	 



# Support an INDEPENDENT lifestyle

## NewHABIT Self-Autonomy: How to begin Lifestyle Redesign Intervention?

In order to delay cognitive deterioration and improve cognition, patients should not only focus on cognitive training or making use of memory aids (e.g., notebooks and technological devices); they should also develop a balanced and regular lifestyle.

The elements for Lifestyle Redesign Intervention include:

- Examine current lifestyle
- Implement healthy, meaningful and cognitive-simulative activities into daily life

### Self-care

- Breaking unhealthy habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption, as these may increase risk of developing “mild cognitive impairment”.
- Establish a balanced and healthy diet. Research has shown that vitamins and carotenoid in fruits and vegetable may reduce oxidative stress, which prevents brain dysfunction like memory loss.
- Focusing on your current assets. Stay optimistic and maintain a positive attitude can reduce stress.

### Work

- Design dinner menu every day
- Implementing memory strategies into household management, like memorizing a groceries list, meal preparation, etc.

### Social & Leisure

Level of difficulty	Activity suggestions
★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read/ watch informative TV programme or publication, like TV news, books, magazine, etc.</li> <li>• Join activities in the Elderly Day Centre</li> <li>• Maintain an active social life</li> </ul>
★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing games like Sudoku/ Scrabble/ Puzzle/ Find the Difference</li> <li>• Play card game (e.g., matching game) and table games like UNO, the Monopoly, Mahjong and Chess.</li> <li>• Playing Ipad/ mobile phone games as cognitive training</li> </ul>
★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting your creative work: writing diary, poems and slogan</li> <li>• Regularly engage in aerobic exercises, such as Taichi and Qigong, in order to promote physical and mental health</li> </ul>

# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

## NewHABIT Interactions: How can caregivers relieve stress?

Although individuals affected by “mild cognitive impairment” are still able to care for themselves independently, they may still need to rely on the help of caregivers to arrange more complex everyday activities (such as scheduling family gatherings and medical appointments) due to their impaired memory. Caregivers may also need to provide additional forms of support, such as helping the affected individuals manage their finances and accompanying them to medical appointments.

Studies show that caregivers often experience depressed mood, anger, guilt and a sense of hopelessness, which can impair their relationship with their affected loved ones (e.g., caregivers may be discouraged from engaging in meaningful interactions with the affected individuals due to communication difficulties). Without the use of appropriate stress-relief methods, some caregivers may become overwhelmed by depressive symptoms and excessive worry (e.g., regarding the financial burden of healthcare costs) and even experience stress-induced physical symptoms (e.g., chronically tense muscles, increased occurrence of illness due to a compromised immune system etc.)

As a caregiver, you can use the following methods to reduce stress:

- Be curious!
  - Learn new ways of caring for your loved one, such as through attending workshops, reading online articles and reading magazines and books.
- Practice self-compassion
  - Being kind to yourself is an imperative step in ensuring that you have the energy to be the best caretaker you can be. Give yourself time away from your affected loved one, take a stroll in a nearby park, and incorporate leisure activities into your schedule (e.g., watch your favorite movie!)



# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

- Acknowledge your efforts
  - Taking care of your loved one can be a challenging and taxing task, so don't forget to pat yourself on the back for all the hard work that you are putting in. Believe in yourself, and never lose sight of the fact that your actions and efforts are incredibly significant in the life of your loved one.
- Manage stress
  - In order to maintain a sense of wellbeing and minimize stress, you should aim to establish a regular sleep pattern, eat a balanced diet, engage in positive thinking, practice relaxation techniques in your daily life and incorporate regular exercise into your schedule.
- Manage your emotions
  - If you find that you are experiencing mood fluctuations while caring for your loved one, try to confide your feelings in a trusted friend or family member but not suppress your emotion excessively or criticize yourself, or feel obliged to attend to every need of your affected loved one.
- Don't be afraid to ask friends and family for support when you need it
  - If you feel overwhelmed by your caregiving duties, do not hesitate to reach out to friends and family for help. For example, you can arrange for a family member to take care of your affected loved one for a given period of time, or you can ask a friend to complete certain household chores.
- Make use of nearby community resources
  - You can attend (and also encourage your loved one to come along!) workshops and small-group discussions provided by nearby elderly community centres. Additionally, actively seek out support services that are available for caregivers, which are often also offered by these.

# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

## NewHABIT Resource Support: How to find "Mild Cognitive Impairment" and "Dementia" support service?

Elderly persons with "mild cognitive impairment/dementia" and their carers can contact District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) or Neighborhood Elderly Centres (NEC) for relevant community support services, including case management, educational workshops, carer support services, social and recreational activities, volunteer services and outreach services (a list of helpful resources can be found on the following pages of this booklet). Besides, the Food and Health Bureau, joining forces with the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), implemented a two-year pilot scheme named "**Dementia Community Support Scheme**" in February 2017 to provide support services for elderly persons with "mild or moderate dementia" and their carers through a medical-social collaboration model at 4 HA Clusters and 20 DECCs in the community. The pilot scheme was regularized in February 2019, and extended to all 41 DECCs and 7 HA clusters in May 2019.

### List of Eastern and Wan Chai District Elderly Community Centres (DECC)

District	Service Unit	Address	Telephone
1 Eastern	The Hong Kong Society for the Aged - Chai Wan District Elderly Community Centre	Rooms 11- 18, G/F, Yue Fung House and Room 32, G/F, Yue On House, Yue Wan Estate, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	2558 0187
2 Eastern	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Fong Shu Chuen District Elderly Community Centre	1/F & 9/F (Portion), Fong Shu Chuen Social Service Building, 6 Po Man Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	2967 9211
3 Eastern	Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association Ming Yue District Elderly Community Centre	G/F, Hong Shui House, Hong Tung Estate, Lei King Road, Sai Wan Ho, Hong Kong	2676 7067
4 Eastern	The Hong Kong Society for the Aged Eastern District Elderly Community Centre	G/F, Phase II, Provident Centre, 53 Wharf Road, North Point, Hong Kong	2563 0187



# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

District	Service Unit	Address	Telephone	
5	Wan Chai	St. James' Settlement Wan Chai District Elderly Community Centre	1/F and 3/F, 85 Stone Nullah Lane, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2835 4324
6	Wan Chai	Methodist Centre Wan Chai Methodist Centre for the Seniors	Shop D, G/F & 1-2/F, 211 Johnston Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2527 4123

## List of Eastern and Wan Chai District of Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NEC)

District	Service Unit	Address	Telephone	
1	Eastern	Hong Kong – Macao Conference of Seventh- day Adventists, Siu Sai Wan Neighbourhood Elderly Centre of Seventh-day Adventists	Unit 6-9, G/F, Sui Lung House, Siu Sai Wan Estate, Hong Kong	2505 7428
2	Eastern	Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod, Harmony Garden Lutheran Centre for the Elderly	1/F, Car Park Building, Harmony Garden, 9 Siu Sai Wan Road, Hong Kong	2904 5647
3	Eastern	Chinese Young Men's Christian Association of Hong Kong, Chai Wan Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	3/F, Chai Wan Municipal Services Building, 338 Chai Wan Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	2898 0752
4	Eastern	Methodist Epworth Village Community Centre, Social Welfare, Hing Wah Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	Room 215 -218, Lok Hing House, Hing Wah Estate (II), Chai Wan, Hong Kong	2558 3338
5	Eastern	Methodist Epworth Village Community Centre, Social Welfare, Epworth Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	Room 513, 5/F, 100 Chai Wan Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	2897 5171



# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

District	Service Unit	Address	Telephone
6 Eastern	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited, Holy Nativity Church Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	1/F, 6 Ah Kung Ngam Road, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	2568 5201
7 Eastern	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Wu Ki Lim Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	G/F, Yiu On House, Yiu Tung Estate, Phase III, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	2535 4387
8 Eastern	Hong Kong & Kowloon Kai-fong Women's Association, Tsang Hui Yuk Wan Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	G/F (Entrance) & 1/F, Metro Hermitage, 38 Hoi An Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	2535 6512
9 Eastern	Endeavourers Hong Kong (The), The Endeavourers HK Bert James Young Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	2/F, 18 Hong On Street, Kornhill, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong	2568 0601
10 Eastern	Women's Welfare Club Western District Hong Kong, Kwan Kai Ming Memorial Chung Hok Elderly Centre	G/F, Hing Hong House, Hing Tung Estate, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	2569 8065
11 Eastern	Women's Welfare Club (Eastern District) Hong Kong, Young Shu Cheung Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	Shops 5-7, 2/F, Maximall, 233 Electric Road, North Point, Hong Kong	2578 9950
12 Eastern	Hop Yat Church The Church of Christ in China, The Church of Christ in China Hop Yat Church Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	2/F, Island Place, 53 Tanner Road, North Point, Hong Kong	2880 0461
13 Wan Chai	Hong Kong Christian Mutual Improvement Society, Chuang Chung Wen Centre for the Elderly	Units 112-118, Tak Chuen Lau, Lai Tak Tsuen, 36 Lai Tak Tsuen Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong	2566 1448

# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

District	Service Unit	Address	Telephone
14 Wan Chai	Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon, Lok Sin Tong Chan Lai Jeong Kiu Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	G/F, Sherwood Court, 16 Kwai Sing Lane, Happy Valley, Hong Kong	2573 2270
15 Wan Chai	Hong Kong Buddhist Association, Buddhist Cheung Miu Yuen Neighbourhood Elderly Centre	2/F, Allways Centre, 468 Jaffe Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2831 0819

The HKSAR Government continues to accord priority to the provision of home care and community care, supplemented by residential care to provide support for frail elderly persons. To meet the different needs of elderly persons living in the community, the SWD has also provided a range of subsidized community care and residential care services. With the implementation of the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services, a standardized assessment tool is adopted to determine which elderly are eligible to receive long-term care services. The SWD also launched the “Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly” and the “Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly” in 2013 and 2017; respectively, to support elderly in need.

If you have any questions about these services, you can approach the SWD through their hotline (2343 2255), or contact the SWD’s service counter (2595 6773) at the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital Department of Psychiatry (Address: 7/F, East Block, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, 3 Lok Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong).

**SWD:** <http://www.swd.gov.hk>

**SWD Thematic Website on Dementia:**

<https://www.swd.gov.hk/dementiacampaign/en/index.html>

**SWD Elderly Information Website:** <https://elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk/en>



# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

Different service units in the community provide community support to the persons with “mild cognitive impairment” or “dementia” and their caregivers, including:

Service Unit Name	Website / Hotline
Hospital Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hong Kong East Cluster (Dementia)</li><li>• Information for carers</li><li>• Smart Patient</li></ul>	<a href="https://www.healthyhkec.org/resources/elderly/dementia/">https://www.healthyhkec.org/resources/elderly/dementia/</a> <a href="http://www.healthyhkec.org/resources/tips/carers/carers.pdf">http://www.healthyhkec.org/resources/tips/carers/carers.pdf</a> <a href="http://www21.ha.org.hk/smartpatient/welcome/">http://www21.ha.org.hk/smartpatient/welcome/</a>
Elderly Health Service, Department of Health, HKSAR <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 24-hour Information Hotline</li></ul>	<a href="http://www.elderly.gov.hk">http://www.elderly.gov.hk</a> 21218080
Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Detection Services</li><li>• Jean Wei Centre</li></ul>	<a href="http://www.hkada.org.hk">http://www.hkada.org.hk</a> 2338 1120 3553 3650
St. James' Settlement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kin Chi Website</li><li>• Wanchai Kin Chi Dementia Care Support Service Centre</li><li>• Kin Chi Dementia Care Support Service Centre</li></ul>	<a href="http://dementia.sjs.org.hk/sjs/tc/index.php">http://dementia.sjs.org.hk/sjs/tc/index.php</a> 2596 2506  2816 9009
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Standard Chartered Hong Kong 150th Anniversary Community Foundation Alzheimer's Community Support Centre</li></ul>	<a href="http://acsc.tungwahcsd.org/">http://acsc.tungwahcsd.org/</a> 2481 1566
Hong Kong Society for the Aged <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Love-your-brain Website</li></ul>	<a href="https://www.loveyourbrain.org.hk">https://www.loveyourbrain.org.hk</a>

# T: Caregiver TRAINING and support

<p>Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xpress Memory Hotline</li> <li>• ADCarer</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.jccpa.org.hk">http://www.jccpa.org.hk</a> 2636 6323 <a href="http://www.ADCarer.com">www.ADCarer.com</a></p>
<p>Christian Family Service Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind Delight Memory &amp; Cognitive Training Centre</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://mlc.cfsc.org.hk">http://mlc.cfsc.org.hk</a> 2793 2138</p>
<p>The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation</p>	<p><a href="http://www.rehabsociety.org.hk/zh-hant/">http://www.rehabsociety.org.hk/zh-hant/</a> 2549 7744</p>
<p>Hong Kong Housing Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elderly Resources Centre</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.hkhselderly.com/erc">http://www.hkhselderly.com/erc</a> 2839 2882</p>



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# THE NEWHABIT TIPS



**FOR PERSONS WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT  
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS (2020 EDITION)**

Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital  
Psychogeriatric Team



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