

Practical Tips for Managing Challenging MS Symptoms on the Job

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Work

- Skill and performance in purposeful and productive activities
- With long life spans a satisfying work life is as important to people with multiple sclerosis as to anyone else
- 43% of adults who have had MS for 12 years retain employment (NMSS)

Cognition and Multiple Sclerosis

- Cognitive changes can occur at any time , and does not correlate with either length of time since diagnosis or level of physical disabilities
- Symptoms can have a big impact on ADLs
- Cognitive fatigue can interfere with ability
- Stress can have a negative impact on cognitive function

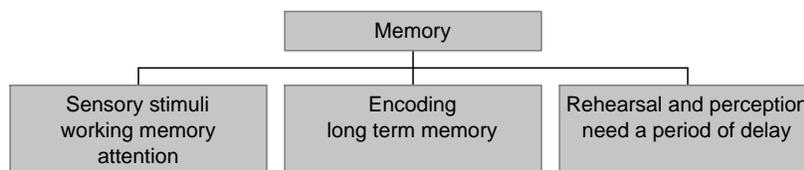
Cognition and Multiple Sclerosis (continued)

- Lack of sleep can have a negative impact on cognition
- Cognitive changes progress slowly
- Identify early and develop effective strategies
- Normal hormone changes that occur with aging
- Some medication have cognitive side effects

Cognition: Problems are more common than previously believed

- Attention and concentration
- Short-term memory
- Information processing
- Executive function/organization
- Decision making and ability to follow through on plans
- Perception
- 45-65% of people with MS

How does memory work?



Get Tested

- Neuropsychological tests

Cognitive decline

- There is currently no approved medications
- Treating the underlying disease with disease-modifying drugs is important

Cognition and Nutrition

- Good Fats: Omega-3 fatty acids linked to improved cognitive function in older adults
 - Fish, nuts, olive oil, canola oil, green leafy vegetables
- Antioxidants: help combat the effects of free radicals that can cause wear and tear on brain cells
 - Prunes, raisins, blueberries, brussel sprouts, broccoli

Cognition-solutions

- Problems with thought do not make you less of a person
- Just like a limp you have to get around
- Cognitive rehabilitation includes skills retraining and compensatory approaches
- Depression has a negative effect on cognitive function; get treated

Cognitive solutions

- Aids:
 - Notes-keep a notepad and make lists
 - Use post-it notes to write reminders and put them in obvious places in the room
 - Organizers-calendar for appointments
 - Organize your environment so that things remain in familiar places

Cognition-solutions (continued)

- Have conversations in quiet places to minimize distractions
- Repeat information and write down important points
- Alarms
- Use of mobile phone/smart phones to remind you of things

Cognition-solutions (Continued)

- Let people know
- Personal assistant
- Slowness of decision making does not make you indecisive
- If you are distractible it not because you don't care