

CLEAR YOUR MIND DURING RECOVERY

A Supportive Guide to Managing Brain Fog After Illness or Injury

What is Brain Fog?

Brain Fog is a common experience during recovery. It's not a disease, it's a set of symptoms that can include:

- Slower thinking or confusion
- Trouble focusing or making decisions
- Forgetfulness or "scattered" thoughts
- Feeling mentally drained, even after rest

Why Does it Happen?

Brain fog can be caused or made worse by:

- Fatigue and poor sleep
- Stress or anxiety
- Side effects of medications
- Low mood or burnout
- Hormonal changes or chronic health conditions
- The body's healing response after illness or injury

Core Strategies to Support your Mind

Create Structure and Simplicity

- Stick to daily routines to reduce mental strain
- Use a planner, wall calendar, or whiteboard to keep track of your day
- Break tasks into small, simple steps.

Focus on One Task at a Time

- Multitasking can increase confusion. Single-tasking supports clarity
- Reduce distractions by turning off notifications and finding quiet spaces
- Try the Pomodoro technique: 25 minutes of gentle focus, 5-minute break

Use External Memory Aids

- Set reminders or alarms on your phone or smartwatch
- Leave sticky notes or checklists in visible spots (mirror, fridge, door)
- Keep a recovery journal to track symptoms, medication, and questions for your doctor.
- Ask others to repeat or write down information when you're feeling foggy.
- Use helpful apps like calendars, to-do lists, or voice memos

Boosting Mental and Physical Energy

Prioritise Sleep and Rest

- Keep a regular sleep routine, and limit screen time before bed
- Schedule quiet time or short naps (20-30 mins) during the day

Gentle Movement Helps

- If cleared by your healthcare provider, start with light walking or stretching
- Movement helps improve circulation and boosts brain function

Nourish and Hydrate Your Brain

- Eat regular meals. Low blood sugar can worsen fog
- Include omega-3s, leafy greens, and whole grains in your diet
- Stay hydrated. Even mild dehydration affects concentration

Regain Focus and Calm

Grounding Techniques for Overwhelm

When you feel scattered or anxious:

- Notice 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste
- Practice slow, deep breathing

Practise Self-Compassion

- Be kind to yourself. Mental energy takes time to rebuild
- Postpone non-urgent tasks and decisions
- Remember that rest is productive

Helpful Tools

- Noise-cancelling headphones to block distractions
- Blue light filters or screen timers to reduce digital fatigue
- Mindfulness or breathing apps (e.g. Calm, Insight Timer)
- Audiobooks, music, or gentle podcasts to keep the mind lightly engaged
- Simple puzzles or games to gently re-engage your mind
- Write down thoughts, worries, or tasks in a journal to clear your mind
- Ergonomic supports like cushions, footrests, or posture aids for physical comfort

When to ask for Help

Contact a doctor, therapist, or occupational therapist if:

- Brain fog is persistent or worsening
- You notice new confusion, language issues, or balance changes
- You feel low, anxious, or overwhelmed most days