Verbal Memory Strategies:

1. There are three primary strategies to use as a general guideline for verbal learning. These are:
   a. Simplify - break complex activities into simple step by step tasks
      i. Keep these steps written down on note book or other planner system
      ii. Check them off as you complete them to stay on task and make sure the task is completed.
   b. Routinize - develop standard way to work through and complete tasks that you follow through with implementation each time.
      i. For multiple tasks, use a divider and have different subjects or task types in each section.
   c. Organize - Structure your day, week, and month. Use of your palm pilot, Timex Data Link Watch, cell phone, paper planner of other online scheduler to be effective in managing appointments, assignments, work schedules, tests, etc.
      i. Clearly label and organize information.
      ii. Keep things uncluttered
      iii. Maintain focus on what goes where for tasks. For example, identifying a common study area and where your materials are located within this area is very helpful.

2. The following are additional verbal learning strategies. All of these are not intended to be used all at one time. Rather, experimenting to find ones that work best for you and then to consistently use this is important.
   a. Over-learn Material: Individuals should be taught the necessity of "over-learning" new information. Practicing to perform one error-free repetition is not sufficient. Several error free repetitions over several trials, days, or weeks is needed.
   b. Performance is improved with additional learning trials. Review the material more often and in smaller segments each day. Every day, you should review what you studied the previous day and then add to that learning the next day. Practice and rehearsal is one of the more common interventions to help with learning.
      i. As you are studying and review, write down practice test questions so that you can go back later and quiz yourself or be a part of a study group that might also quiz each other.
   c. Develop a way to systematically take notes. Common test information is found in bold face words and vocabulary and key points made in a chapter. Take notes as you read, writing down these words for review for multi-sensory or paired learning.
   d. Chunking is a common strategy for note taking or writing papers. This is finding parallels between important information, combing these principles together and then studying them as a chunk or writing your paper using this combined information. It starts as an outline of important aspects, then builds on other information, similar to the point made in the first point above.
   e. Put things in your own words and make sure you are confident saying the material yourself. Simply copying from a book might not be as effective as finding the way that makes sense for you.
   f. These are things you have probably heard before, but are certainly can be useful techniques:
      i. Mnemonics - to use a meaningful acronym or sentence to remember a series of items. HOMES for the great lakes
      ii. Flash cards - record individual facts on separate index cards that can be reviewed periodically is recommended to facilitate learning and retention.
      iii. Try to have things rhyme or make sense with some fun lyric that you come up with
g. Time allocation - because it takes you longer to complete tasks, you need to allow whatever additional time is necessary for you to complete those tasks.

h. Retrieval Practice: Long-term memory is enhanced with retrieval practice. It can be very helpful to take practice tests, participate in study groups, committee review teams, etc. Make up a review to take at a later time
   i. Study groups can be tremendously beneficial as long as their intent is studying and not being social or a meeting time to prepare for a social event. Effective study groups review questions or materials not understood, review key concepts that they believe are important to know, and develop ways to quiz/test each other to increase there ability to be successful on a test.
   j. Trying to use methods that can increase a more positive state of mind. Listening to familiar music in the background, be comfortable in the chair or location you are in, recognize the learning you are doing by successfully reviewing and responding to your own questions, if possible make tasks hands on or interactive, etc.

j. Be an Active Reader: To enhance short-term memory registration and/or working memory when reading, Individuals should:
   i. Underline, highlight, or jot key words down in the margin when reading chapters.
   ii. Go back and read what is underlined, highlighted, or written in the margins. To consolidate this information in long-term memory,
      1. Use different colors of ink or high lighters to increase diversity and to denote material or more or less importance. A pink highlighter could highlight a book or notes for really important information on review, Yellow middle, Green could be fun facts that probably will not be tested but should be known.
   iii. Make outlines or use graphic organizers.

3. Ask for or Repeat Directions in Multiple Formats: Individuals benefit from being given directions in both visual and verbal formats.

4. Makes use of Word Substitution. The substitute word system can be used for information that is hard to visualize, for example, for the word *occipital* or *parietal*. These words can be converted into words that sound familiar that can be visualized. The word occipital can be converted to exhibit hall (because it sounds like exhibit hall).

5. Tried to Obtain Prepared Handouts for Lectures, Agendas, Meetings, etc: This can help you to gain a structure and to allow you to focus more on the information sharing to add important details, but not having to keep up with writing, organizing and remember at the same time.

6. The use of Post-Its to jot information down on is helpful for remembering this in the moment. They are small and easier to carry around.

7. Write Down Steps in Math Problems: Individuals who have a weakness in working memory should not rely on mental computations when solving math problems.

8. Prior to Teaching/Learning/Reviewing find out the Goals or Purpose: Essentially, ask what the intention and goals are prior to the completion of the time so that your mind has a goal from the outset of the information being provided.
   a. Ask for a review of information prior to a meeting or other lecture starts. What did we learn the last time and how are we building on that for the current meeting or lecture. Or you can do this yourself with a review prior to the time for lecture, meeting or other event.

9. Review Material Before Going to Sleep: Any other task that is performed after reviewing and prior to sleeping (such as getting a snack, brushing teeth, listening to music) interferes with consolidation of information in memory, so plan ahead.

10. There has been research from the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center regarding the need for norepinephrine for memory retrieval. A medication that might stimulate norepinephrine might be beneficial, but this would be a discussion to have with the primary treating physician.