



Compass Cognition

Oriented Neuropsychological Evaluation

Staying Oriented

A Cognitive Activity Book for Adults

Twenty sessions for thinking, memory, and everyday life

This book belongs to

Start date

Compass Cognition, LLC

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This workbook offers general brain-health activities. It does not diagnose or treat any condition and does not replace care from your doctor. Provided free of charge. Not for resale.

Welcome

This book is a workout for your thinking. Aim for at least two or three sessions a week, 20 to 30 minutes each. If you enjoy it, one a day is fine. The activities are meant to be enjoyable, social, and just a little challenging.

How the book is organized

1. A goals page to fill in before you begin.
2. A full warm-up page for days with more time.
3. Twenty sessions, about 7 to 10 weeks at two or three a week.
4. Memory strategy practice.
5. Attention and speed practice.
6. An answer key and notes for clinicians and care partners.

For you, the reader

- Do one session at a time, in order. Start with the warm-up box, then pick two or three activities. You do not need to finish a page to get the benefit.
- There are no wrong answers in most activities. Many ask for your opinions and memories.
- Start with the unlabeled (Level 1) activities. Try those marked with  once Level 1 feels easy. Skip anything that feels too hard.
- Doing these with another person is better than doing them alone. Talking is part of the exercise. If you live alone, look for the "On your own" notes.
- Use reading glasses or hearing aids if you have them. Work in good light with the TV off.

For the care partner

- **Ask for opinions, not facts.** "What do you think of this?" works better than "Do you remember this?"
- **Learning versus playing.** When they are learning something to remember, like a name or where the keys go, give the answer right away and have them repeat it, since wrong guesses can stick. In quizzes and games, guessing is part of the fun.
- **Aim for success.** Most items should be within reach. Adjust as you go.
- **Keep it social.** Laughter, stories, and side conversations are the point.
- **Be gentle with sad memories.** If a memory brings sadness, that's okay. Listen, and move on gently.
- **Stop while it's going well.** End before fatigue or frustration sets in.
- **Watch for change.** Tell the treating clinician about new confusion, mood changes, or a sudden drop in ability.

My goals

Fill this in before you start Session 1, with your care partner or clinician if you can. Choose up to three everyday things you want to do more easily. Good goals are specific and matter to you. Examples: "Take my evening pills without reminders," "Use my phone to call my daughter," "Keep track of my appointments."

	My goal	How I'll work on it	Who can help	Check-in date
1				
2				
3				

How am I doing? Every two weeks, rate each goal from 1 (not going well) to 10 (going great).

Date	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3

Daily warm-up

Every session starts with a short warm-up box. On days with more time, do this full warm-up too. After the first time, use a separate sheet. Check answers with a calendar, newspaper, or phone. Looking things up is encouraged.

Where and when am I?

Question	My answer
Today is (day of the week)	
The date is (month, day, year)	
The season is	
I am in (city and state)	
The weather today is	
The next holiday is	

Today's plan

Time	What I am doing today
Morning	
Afternoon	
Evening	

Today's news

One thing I heard or read about today: _____

What I think about it: _____

Get moving (2 minutes). Sit in a sturdy chair with your feet flat on the floor. Do each move 10 times: march your feet in place, roll your shoulders, reach both arms up, and turn your head slowly side to side. Skip any move that causes pain.

Today's song. Name a song you like. Hum or sing a little of it. Where were you when you first heard it?

Twenty sessions

Session 1: Growing up

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Share a memory. Talk or write about each one.

- The place where you grew up. What did you see out the window?

- A favorite toy or game.

- Your first job or responsibility, paid or unpaid. What did you do?

- A teacher you remember. Why do they stand out?

Then and now. For each item, describe how it was when you were young and how it is today: telephones, grocery shopping, getting the news, a trip to the doctor.

Item	When I was young	Today
Telephones		
Grocery shopping		
Getting the news		
A trip to the doctor		

★ Level 2 Make a short timeline of your life with five important events. Add the year or your age for each.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Session 2: This time of year

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Find your season. Look at a calendar. Which season is it right now? Name three things that tell you it is this season, like the weather, the trees, or the holidays coming up.

1.

2.

3.

Talk about it. What do you like to do at this time of year? What was this season like where you grew up?

★ **Level 2** Fill in something that goes with each season.

Season	A holiday	A food	The weather
Spring			
Summer			
Autumn			
Winter			

Session 3: Food and cooking

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Memory Practice 3: Let tools do the remembering (page 38)

Put it in order. These steps for making a cup of tea are mixed up. Write the letters A to E in the order you would do them.

- A. Pour the hot water into the cup.
- B. Boil the water.
- C. Remove the tea bag.
- D. Put a tea bag in the cup.
- E. Add milk or sugar if you like.

My order: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ 4th _____ 5th _____

Sort it. Put each word into the right group: carrot, apple, spoon, banana, pot, broccoli, grape, spatula, potato.

Fruits	Vegetables	Kitchen tools

★ **Level 2** Plan a dinner for four people. List the dishes and every ingredient you would need to buy.

Dishes

Ingredients to buy

Session 4: Sayings and sounds

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Finish the saying.

1. An apple a day keeps _____.
2. The early bird catches _____.
3. Don't count your chickens before _____.
4. A stitch in time saves _____.
5. Every cloud has _____.
6. Too many cooks spoil _____.
7. Look before you _____.
8. Better late than _____.

★ **Level 2** What does it mean? Pick two sayings. Explain each one in your own words. Do you agree with it?

Sounds around you. Sit quietly for one minute with your eyes closed. List every sound you heard. A partner can make sounds for you to name: keys jingling, paper tearing, a spoon tapping a glass, hands clapping.

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

Session 5: Places

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 1: Find the fruits (page 39)

Where in the world? Name the city where you would find each place.

1. Eiffel Tower _____
2. Statue of Liberty _____
3. Golden Gate Bridge _____
4. Big Ben _____
5. Gateway Arch _____
6. Indianapolis Motor Speedway _____



Describe the picture. Tell a partner what you see. What season do you think it is? Who might live in this house? On your own? Write what you see.

★ **Level 2** Draw a map. Sketch the rooms of your home, or the route from your home to a store you visit often. Label what you pass along the way.

Session 6: Things that go together

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Finish the pair.

Word	Goes with
Salt and	
Bread and	
Cup and	
Needle and	
Thunder and	
Lock and	
Knife and	
Peanut butter and	

Odd one out. Circle the one that does not belong. Say why.

1. ROBIN, SPARROW, BAT, CARDINAL _____
2. HAMMER, WRENCH, SPOON, SCREWDRIVER _____
3. INDIANAPOLIS, CHICAGO, OHIO, DENVER _____
4. PIANO, VIOLIN, TRUMPET, EASEL _____

★ **Level 2** Make your own odd-one-out puzzle for someone else to solve.

Session 7: Being creative

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Write a postcard. Pretend you are on a trip anywhere you like. Write a short postcard to someone you care about. Say where you are, what the weather is like, and one thing you did today.

Draw and describe. Draw a simple picture of a cup, a tree, and a house. Then describe one of them to a partner without showing it. Can they draw it from your description? On your own? Write a description of one drawing. Tomorrow, read it and see if it brings the picture back to mind.

★ **Level 2** Story starter. Finish this story in three or four sentences: "When I opened the old box in the attic, I found..."

Session 8: Sorting and grouping

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Memory Practice 1: Remember it longer (page 37)

How many groups? Sort these 12 words into groups any way that makes sense to you. Explain your groups.

dog, chair, rose, cat, table, daisy, horse, lamp, tulip, cow, sofa, lily

Same and different. How are these alike? How are they different?

1. An orange and a banana

2. A car and a bicycle

3. A letter and a phone call

★ **Level 2** Name 5 things for each: things that are cold, things with wheels, things you find in a garden.

Things that are cold	Things with wheels	Things in a garden

Session 9: Money and shopping

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Use these prices for every question. Work the answers out with paper and pencil. Real coins and bills make it easier and more fun.

Item	Price
Milk	\$3.50
Bread	\$2.75
Eggs	\$4.25
Apples	\$3.00

1. What do milk and bread cost together? _____
2. What do eggs and apples cost together? _____
3. What do all four items cost? _____

Talk about it. What did a loaf of bread or a gallon of gas cost when you were young?

★ **Level 2** Making change. You pay for all four items with a \$20 bill. How much change do you get? Then you buy only milk and bread with a \$10 bill. How much change do you get?

Change from \$20

Change from \$10

Work it out here

Session 10: Word games

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 2: Same or different? (page 40)

Unscramble the fruit.

1. PELPA _____
2. NANABA _____
3. GRANOE _____
4. MELNO _____
5. EPAR _____
6. RYCHER _____

Make a compound word. Match a word from the left with a word from the right.

Left	Right
sun	bell
rain	cake
foot	flower
tooth	ball
pan	coat
door	brush

★ **Level 2** Letter list. Pick a letter: B, M, or S. Name as many foods as you can that start with it in one minute. Try again tomorrow with a different letter.

1.	9.	17.
2.	10.	18.
3.	11.	19.
4.	12.	20.
5.	13.	21.
6.	14.	22.
7.	15.	23.
8.	16.	24.

Session 11: Family and friends

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

My people. Write the names of people who matter to you. Add one thing you like to do with each person.

Name	How I know them	Something we enjoy together

Talk about it. Tell the story of how you met a close friend or partner. Where were you? What did you notice first?

★ **Level 2** Look at an old photo. Name everyone in it and say when and where it was taken.

Session 12: Look closely

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Spot the differences. Picture 2 has 5 changes from Picture 1. Circle each change in Picture 2. Find at least 3.

Picture 1



Picture 2



Describe it. Tell a partner everything you see in Picture 1: colors, shapes, and where things are. On your own? Write it down instead.

★ **Level 2** Find all 5 differences. Then cover the pictures and name as many differences as you can.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Differences I remembered with the pictures covered

Session 13: Around the house

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 3: Secret messages (page 41)

Which room? Write each item under the room where it usually belongs:
toothbrush, pillow, frying pan, towel, blanket, toaster, soap, dresser, kettle.

Kitchen	Bathroom	Bedroom

Put it in order. These laundry steps are mixed up. Write the letters A to E in the order you would do them.

- A. Fold the clothes.
- B. Put the clothes in the washer.
- C. Add detergent.
- D. Move the clothes to the dryer.
- E. Start the washer.

My order: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ 4th _____ 5th _____

★ **Level 2** Walk through one room in your home. Name every item you see that starts with the letter C.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

More items

Session 14: Everyday objects

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Name them. Write the name of each object and what you use it for. Stuck on a name? A partner can say it and you repeat it, or check the answer key.

	Object	Name	What I use it for
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

★ **Level 2** Sort the objects into groups: things for the kitchen, things to take outside, and things for reading or writing. Some can go in more than one group. Explain your choices.

Kitchen	Outside	Reading or writing

Session 15: Time and calendars

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 4: Two things at once (page 41)

Clock questions.

1. What time is it 30 minutes after 2:15? _____
2. What time is it 1 hour before 10:00? _____
3. **★ Level 2** Your appointment is at 3:30. The drive takes 20 minutes. What time should you leave? _____

Calendar questions.

1. If today is Monday, what day is it in 3 days? _____
2. What month comes after September? _____
3. What month comes before March? _____

Plan your week. Fill in one thing you will do each day this week on your calendar.

Day	My plan
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Session 16: Music

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Name the instrument.

1. It has 88 black and white keys. _____
2. You blow into it and move a slide in and out. _____
3. It has strings, is played with a bow, and is held under the chin.

4. You hit it with sticks to keep the beat. _____
5. It has six strings and is often strummed around a campfire.

Copy the rhythm. A partner claps a short pattern. You clap it back. Start with 3 claps and build up to 6. On your own? Turn on a song and tap along to the beat.

Talk about it. What music do you remember from a big celebration? Did you ever dance to it?

★ **Level 2** Name a song you remember from each stage of your life: childhood, your teens, your twenties, and now.

Time of life	Song	A memory it brings back
Childhood		
Teens		
Twenties		
Now		

More songs I love

Session 17: Directions

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 1: Find the fruits. Try to beat your first time (page 39)

Which way am I facing?

1. You face north and turn right. Which way are you facing now?

2. You face east and turn all the way around. Which way now?

3. You face south and turn left. Which way now? _____
4. You face west and turn right. Which way now? _____

Give directions. Tell a partner how to get from your front door to your kitchen sink. Can they follow your directions? On your own? Write the directions, then walk the route and check each step.

★ **Level 2** Describe the route from your home to a place you visit often. Name the turns and what you pass.

Session 18: Memory in daily life

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Your memory spots. Write where you keep each of these things. If something doesn't have one spot, pick one now and use it every day.

Thing	Where it lives
Keys	
Glasses	
Wallet or purse	
Phone	
Medicines	

Tell it back. Watch or listen to one news story, TV show, or conversation today. Afterward, tell someone who was in it, what happened, and where. On your own? Write it down.

★ **Level 2** **Use the picture method.** Write a shopping list of 5 things you really need. Make one silly picture in your mind that links them all, like the example in the memory practice section. Put the list away. Later today, say your list, then check it.

My shopping list

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My silly picture

Session 19: Riddles and reasoning

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Riddles.

1. What has hands but can't clap? _____
2. What gets wetter the more it dries? _____
3. What has keys but can't open locks? _____
4. What goes up but never comes down? _____

Who is youngest? Ann is older than Bob. Bob is older than Carl. Who is the youngest?

★ Level 2 Who sits where? Three friends sit in a row. Sue sits on the left. Tom does not sit next to Sue. Where does Tom sit, and who is in the middle?

Session 20: Looking back

Today's date	The weather	Today's plan

Also today: Attention Practice 2: Same or different. Compare with your first time (page 40)

Looking back. Answer these questions.

1. Which session was your favorite? Why?

2. Which activity was the hardest?

3. Have you noticed any changes in your thinking, mood, or daily routine?

4. What did you learn about yourself or the people in your life?

Do it again. Repeat your favorite activity from this book.

What's next. Look at your goals page. Rate each goal and decide what to work on next. You can start again at Session 1. Try the Level 2 activities this time.

Certificate of Completion

Name

completed all 20 sessions of Staying Oriented

Date

Memory strategy practice

These strategies help with everyday memory. Practice them until they become habits. Habits keep working even on hard days.

Practice 1: Remember it longer, a little at a time

Pick one useful fact to learn. Examples: "My keys go in the blue bowl," a grandchild's name, or a new phone number.

1. A partner says the fact. You repeat it right away.
2. Wait 30 seconds, then the partner asks for it again.
3. If you remember it, double the wait: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 4 minutes, 8 minutes.
4. If you don't remember, the partner gives the answer right away. You repeat it, and the wait goes back to the last time that worked.
5. Talk or do other activities during the waits. On your own? Use a kitchen timer for the waits. Write the fact on a card and keep it face down. If you can't remember it when the timer rings, turn the card over right away.

Fact I am learning	30 sec	1 min	2 min	4 min	8 min	Next day

Mark a check for each time you remembered.

Practice 2: Make a picture in your mind ★ Level 2

Turn words into a picture. The sillier the picture, the better it sticks.

Example: to remember to buy milk, eggs, and bananas, picture a cow juggling eggs while wearing a banana hat.

Try it. Make one picture in your mind for these four words: bread, soap, stamps, lightbulb. Close the book, wait 5 minutes, then write the words from memory.

1.

3.

2.

4.

Names and faces. When you meet someone, say their name back right away. Link the name to something: "Rose" with a flower, "Mr. Baker" with a loaf of bread. Use the name again before you say goodbye.

Practice 3: Let tools do the remembering

These tools take the load off memory. Check off each one you set up this week.

- ☐ One calendar, always in the same place, with appointments and plans
- ☐ A memory notebook for to-dos, phone messages, and things to tell people
- ☐ A landing spot by the door for keys, wallet, glasses, and phone
- ☐ A weekly pill organizer, filled on the same day each week
- ☐ Phone alarms or reminders for medicines and appointments
- ☐ A note by the door: "Keys? Phone? Stove off?"
- ☐ A daily routine for meals, walks, and rest at the same times

Daily check. Each evening, look at the calendar and notebook. Cross off what is done. Look at tomorrow.

Attention and speed practice

These activities train you to notice details quickly. Time yourself with a clock or phone. Try to beat your own time, not anyone else's. Accuracy comes first, speed second. Some days are slower than others, and that's normal. Just do your best.

Practice 1: Find the fruits

Circle every fruit. Write down how long it took.

TRUCK	SOCK	SPOON	PEAR	APPLE
BEAN	LEMON	CHAIR	LAMP	ONION
TOWEL	DRUM	MANGO	KEY	RADIO
ORANGE	SHOE	CLOCK	RUG	CHERRY
PEACH	BREAD	CORN	BANANA	PLUM

How many fruits did you find? _____ Time: _____

Practice 2: Same or different?

Look at each pair. Write S if they are exactly the same or D if they are different.

Left	Right	S or D
4829	4829	
7153	7135	
3061	3061	
58274	58247	
Martha Lee	Martha Lee	
Robert Hall	Robert Hill	
62091	62091	
Oak Street	Oak Street	
9 Elm Ave	9 Elm Ave	
1847	1874	

Time: _____

Practice 3: Secret messages

In these messages, numbers stand for vowels. Decode each one.

1	2	3	4	5
A	E	I	O	U

1. K22P Y45R M3ND 1CT3V2 _____

2. W1LK 2V2RY D1Y _____

3. C1LL 1 FR32ND _____

Practice 4: Two things at once

Sit in a sturdy chair. Tap your feet in a steady rhythm while naming animals, one per tap. Then try naming foods, or counting by 2s. If the tapping or the words stop, slow down and make the word task easier.

Track your times

Date	Find the fruits	Same or different	Notes

Answer key

Many activities have no single right answer. These are the ones that do.

Session 3: Tea order is B, D, A, C, E.
Fruits: apple, banana, grape. Vegetables: carrot, broccoli, potato. Kitchen tools: spoon, pot, spatula.

Session 4: 1. the doctor away · 2. the worm · 3. they hatch · 4. nine · 5. a silver lining · 6. the broth · 7. leap · 8. never

Session 5: 1. Paris · 2. New York · 3. San Francisco · 4. London · 5. St. Louis · 6. Indianapolis (Speedway, Indiana)

Session 6 pairs: pepper, butter, saucer, thread, lightning, key, fork, jelly.

Session 6 odd one out: 1. bat (not a bird) · 2. spoon (not a tool) · 3. Ohio (a state, not a city) · 4. easel (not an instrument)

Session 8 sorting (one way): animals (dog, cat, horse, cow), furniture (chair, table, lamp, sofa), flowers (rose, daisy, tulip, lily). Other groupings are fine if you can explain them.

Session 9: 1. \$6.25 · 2. \$7.25 · 3. \$13.50.
★ **Level 2** \$6.50 change from \$20; \$3.75 change from \$10.

Session 10: apple, banana, orange, lemon, pear, cherry. Compound words: sunflower, raincoat, football, toothbrush, pancake, doorbell.

Session 12: 1. The sun is missing. 2. The door is blue instead of red. 3. The right window is missing. 4. The bird on the fence is missing. 5. There are two flowers instead of three.

Session 13: Kitchen: frying pan, toaster, kettle. Bathroom: toothbrush, towel, soap. Bedroom: pillow, blanket, dresser. Laundry order: B, C, E, D, A.

Session 14: 1. Cup or mug · 2. Key · 3. Clock · 4. Umbrella · 5. Light bulb · 6. Book · 7. Eyeglasses · 8. Pencil · 9. Spoon

Session 15: 1. 2:45 · 2. 9:00 · 3. 3:10.
Calendar: 1. Thursday · 2. October · 3. February

Session 16: 1. Piano · 2. Trombone · 3. Violin · 4. Drum · 5. Guitar

Session 17: 1. East · 2. West · 3. East · 4. North

Session 19: 1. A clock · 2. A towel · 3. A piano · 4. Your age. Carl is the youngest. Tom sits on the right, and the third friend sits in the middle.

Attention and speed practice

Find the fruits: 9 (pear, apple, lemon, mango, orange, cherry, peach, banana, plum)

Same or different: S, D, S, D, S, D, S, S, S, D

Secret messages: 1. KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE · 2. WALK EVERY DAY · 3. CALL A FRIEND

For clinicians and care partners: the evidence

The book is built for mild cognitive impairment and mild-to-moderate dementia. It draws on approaches with randomized-trial support, but it is not itself a validated protocol. Expect modest benefits to cognition and larger benefits to mood, engagement, and daily function.

Book section	Approach	What the evidence shows
Themed sessions, daily warm-up	Cognitive stimulation (CST principles: themes, orientation, opinions over facts, reminiscence, social interaction)	Cochrane review of 37 RCTs (n = 2,766): small cognitive benefit, moderate certainty; better communication, social interaction, and mood. Gains were greatest at milder stages and with sessions twice weekly or more. NICE recommends group CST for mild-to-moderate dementia.
Attention and speed practice	Processing-speed training	ACTIVE trial 20-year follow-up: speed training plus boosters linked to 25% lower claims-based dementia incidence. Memory and reasoning arms showed no significant effect. ACTIVE used adaptive computerized training; these paper tasks are an analog, not a replacement.
Memory strategy practice	Spaced retrieval, errorless learning, mnemonics, external aids	Spaced retrieval and errorless learning are well-supported for teaching specific, functional information in dementia. Gains are task-specific and rarely generalize. External aids show the most practical day-to-day benefit.
My goals	Goal-oriented cognitive rehabilitation	Cochrane review (Kudlicka 2023): high-certainty evidence for improved goal attainment and satisfaction in mild-to-moderate dementia, sustained at medium-term follow-up.

Notes for use

- **Format matters.** CST evidence comes mostly from small groups, twice weekly, for about 7 weeks or more. Use the book with a partner or group when possible; solo use is less studied.
- **Errorless approach.** During learning tasks (spaced retrieval, names, routines), care partners supply answers rather than prompting guesses. Guessing is fine in games and quizzes, where the goal is engagement.
- **Test overlap.** Daily orientation practice is a core part of cognitive stimulation, and it overlaps with orientation items on common cognitive screening tests. Other activities avoid standard test formats. If the person will be screened or re-evaluated, tell the examiner they use this book.
- **Watch the mood.** Frustration, tearfulness, or refusal means the level is too high. Lower difficulty or switch to reminiscence and conversation.
- **Not a substitute for care.** New or rapid decline, safety concerns, depression, or caregiver strain warrant clinical follow-up.

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