



Dignity in Dementia

Helping you support people with dementia

www.dignityindementia.org

Helping someone with dementia to stay active at home – if you can't go out due to Coronavirus

It's very probable that older people will be advised to stay at home to reduce the chance of catching coronavirus. If you are looking after a person with dementia, who doesn't understand why their usual routines are being disrupted, it's likely to be an especially challenging time - for them and for you.

People living with dementia can often demonstrate frustration and anxiety when they are bored. Therefore it's important to keep them feeling engaged, occupied and valued. To help with this, we've put together some ideas of things you can organise at home to help keep them busy. Remember that the person with dementia may not be able to do a task to the standard they did before. The idea is to keep them active and help them feel useful, not to get a job done. Also choose things you think that they'll enjoy. If they weren't interested in something before they got dementia, they are unlikely to find it engaging now.

Outdoor

- Ideally it's important to have 30 minutes outside each day, to get fresh air and to maintain the body clock. If possible take a short walk but be careful to stay away from others. Alternatively, if you have a garden, try and spend time in it. Perhaps do a garden task together such as sweeping the path, cutting back a bush or putting out bird feed. Sit in it on warmer days and enjoy looking at the plants.
- Clean the car or tidy the shed.



Indoor

- Low impact chair exercises to music – there are some really engaging DVDs to purchase online e.g Smile & Sway available at Amazon for £10.95 or look on YouTube for free exercise films.
- Meaningful activity that involves movement – clean windows and if you don't want the person to use chemicals, use a cloth and plain water in a spray, vacuum, dust, clean out a cupboard or sweep the kitchen floor.
- Look on dementia activity sites e.g. [Activities to Share](#) or [Active Minds](#) for puzzle, games and fun activity products.
- Try Japanese memory tests, available from [Glorious Opportunities](#)
- Dance to the radio or a favourite CD or download.
- Music – listen and sing along to meaningful tunes – check out [Playlist for Life](#) to find out the value of personalised music. Find recordings of a favourite artist on YouTube.
- Watch a favourite film or an episode of a TV series e.g. Fawlty Towers, Porridge, Strictly Come Dancing, The Great British Bake off. Show a DVD or if you have a streaming service there are lots of old favourites.
- Watch favourite sporting moments e.g. The Ashes or Wimbledon.
- Tidy up a drawer together, or clean brasses, polish shoes, do some darning.
- Sand an old bowl or piece of wood.
- Sort socks or fold tea towels.
- Think about old hobbies the person used to do. For example if they were a knitter but can't knit any more, undo an old knitted garment and create a ball of wool.
- Look at photos - sort them into themes. Create a memory room with photos if you have a spare room or create a photobook together.
- Use the internet to research information about important places and things from the past e.g. where they lived as a child, what their parents did for a living.
- Paint or use adult colouring books.
- Ask for help with simple cooking and baking tasks. Even stirring the pot can make the person with dementia feel really good. Ask for help setting the table and doing the washing up.
- Do craft work e.g. making cards or an Easter bonnet for grandchildren.
- Create themed bags e.g. cooking, gardening, going to the beach and talk about the items in the bag.



Stay in Contact

Make sure you keep in contact with family and friends. Use the internet (Facetime/Skype/Whatsapp) for face-to-face conversations and if you don't have the internet, use the phone.

About Dignity in Dementia:

We're an award winning, not-for-profit Community Interest Company based in Cumbria. We aim to help make the lives of people affected by dementia as normal and positive as possible.

<http://www.dignityindementia.org>

