Activities for Older Adults with Dementia

The Alzheimer’s Association suggests making a daily plan of activities for the person with dementia. A plan adds structure to the day and gives the person with dementia a sense of dignity and self-esteem. The plan should include a variety of chores and fun activities based on the person’s interests and skills.

Tips for Planning an Activity

- Be creative and flexible.
- Think about what time of day is best.
- Help get the activity started.
- Focus on the process, not the result.
- Help with complex tasks.
- Balance activities with rest.
- Involve family and friends.
- Adjust the activity to the person’s ability.

Types of Daily Activities

It can be helpful to plan different types of activities each day, including both chores and fun in the plan.

More on next page ➔
Here are some examples to consider

Life Skills Activities:
- Clean
- Do laundry
- Cook or baking
- Eat
- Bathe
- Shave
- Get dressed
- Brush or comb hair

Physical, Creative, Emotional and Social Activities:
- Paint or do crafts
- Play the piano or sing familiar songs
- Read a book quietly or out loud
- Do a crossword puzzle
- Take photos and make a collage
- Make stories of favorite events, books, or pictures
- Go on a car ride
- Have a picnic lunch
- Take a walk
- Talk with or visit friends
- Play cards
- Sew
- Look at family photos
- Do outside chores, such as rake leaves or take care of a garden
- Visit local points of interest
- Attend church or say prayers together
- Look at maps, talk about important events in history
- Use Play-Doh® or clay to make models or sculptures
- Watch fish swim in a tank
- Take turns writing a story or poem
- Sort objects by shape, color, or size
- Write letters to family or friends
- Blow bubbles
- Arrange fresh flowers
Make a Daily Plan

A person with dementia needs help to organize his or her day. Use what you know about the person’s interests and skills to make a written plan for the day. This plan should allow spare time for spontaneous activities. At the end of the day think about how the day went and make changes if needed. Add a new activity from time to time and be sure that there is enough time to rest.

Sample Daily Plan

Morning
- Wash, brush teeth and get dressed.
- Help make breakfast.
- Read the newspaper together and talk about it.
- Look at photos together and talk about what you see
- Quiet time.
- Do some chores together.
- Take a walk or play an active game

Afternoon
- Help make lunch. Wash the dishes.
- Watch TV or listen to music.
- Do some gardening or visit a friend.
- Take a nap.
- Do some physical activity.

Evening
- Help make dinner. Wash the dishes.
- Play cards.
- Give a massage.
- Take a bath and get ready for bed.
- Read a book.
Your Daily Plan

Use what you know about the person’s interests and skills to write your own daily plan below. Choose activities that give the person joy and a sense of accomplishment. Flexibility is important. Avoid activities that cause your loved one stress.

**Morning**
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**Afternoon**
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**Evening**
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Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.