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Our “Top Tips” for living well with dementia



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Acknowledgements

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Henry Rankin

The hints and tips in this leaflet were the ideas of a subgroup from SDWG, however you may also have hints and tips to living well. Please get in touch and share your ideas with us at sdwg@alzscot.org.

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SDWG at work on this booklet.



Introduction

In 2015 a 'Top Tips' subgroup was formed with members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group and Lynsey Robertson-Flannigan, an occupational therapy intern from Alzheimer Scotland and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

The purpose of this group was to collect a range of tips for living well with dementia that are tried and tested by members of the group. These tips were then collated together in a booklet to be shared with people affected by dementia.

We are aware that the suggestions included within this booklet may not work for everyone, but they are strategies which members of the group have found useful in helping them to live well and independently with dementia, and may be of benefit to others.

Producing this booklet has been a real pleasure and involved three meetings where we were all kept going with cake and tea. We hope that the tips included within this booklet will be of use to people with dementia now and for years to come.

All views expressed in this booklet are those of the Scottish Dementia Working Group's Top Tips group.

Henry Rankin
Scottish Dementia Working Group Chair
November 2015



At Home

The following tips and strategies were suggested by members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group for use in the home:

Kitchen

- Blackboard stickers or signs on kitchen cabinets can be a reminder of what is inside.
- Having transparent kitchen appliances could make it easy to see when the kettle is boiling or if the toast is ready.



At Home

- A note on the cooker could prevent you from becoming distracted while cooking. For example: "Do not answer the door or phone, you are cooking."
- Blackboard stickers or signs on kitchen cabinets can be a reminder of what is inside.
- A timer can remind you that food needs to be checked or that it is ready to eat. A portable timer can be carried to different rooms of the house.
- Timers can be used to remind you to turn off appliances, such as the oven or iron. This can prevent fire hazards.



Reminders

Reminders for information, dates and appointments can be used around the home in a variety of ways:

- Laminated reminders
- Labels
- Whiteboards
- Notice boards
- Magnetic boards
- Recorded messages
- Labels on drawers can be a reminder of what is inside
- Post-it notes.



Reminders

- Having a checklist at the front door. For example:
 - Have you turned the gas off?
 - Have you turned off electrical appliances?
 - Do you have your car keys / purse / wallet?
 - Is the back door locked?
 - Are the windows shut?
 - Remember to lock front door?
- Calendars with large boxes to record appointments or diaries which have clearly separated days.
- Printed reminders should be interesting to look at so that they catch your attention. Using coloured card or photographs can help.



Moving Around Your Home Safely

- Some local authorities can provide useful services to promote safety in the home. These can include a wide range of community alarms or alarms which make a sound when you leave your house.
- Trip hazards can be reduced by painting the last step in a contrasting colour. This can make it clearer where the stairs end.

Out and About



Using public transport can be a daunting prospect, the following tips and strategies were suggested by members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group:

Using Buses, Trains and Taxis

- Keep a card in your wallet or purse stating your final destination. This can remind you what to ask for when purchasing a ticket.
- Keeping 'emergency change' in your wallet, purse or pockets can be useful when public transport needs to be used unexpectedly.
- Keep a note inside your bus pass of your home address and frequently visited places.





Car Parks

- Many mobile phones now have cameras which can be used to take a photograph of where the car is parked. This can aid you in finding it.
- Leaving a can of juice on the roof of the car or tying a plastic bag to the aerial can be a reminder for where a car has been parked.

Keys

- Bells on keys can be helpful for locating them within bags and pockets.
- Keys and locks can be colour-coded to make them easier to use. For example: yellow key is for yellow lock, pink key for pink lock.

Staying Safe and Asking for Help



- Carrying a card with an explanation of dementia in your bag, wallet or purse can be useful if you feel the need to explain to someone that you have dementia, or if you need to ask for help.
- Carrying a mobile phone can be valuable in an emergency or distressing situation. Having speed dials for people means that you can call them quickly and easily.
- It is good to have an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact stored in your phone with a person's phone number. The emergency services will look for this ICE contact number when helping a person in crisis.
- Keyrings can be purchased that hold details such as your emergency contact information.



Medication

The following tips and strategies were suggested by members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group regarding medication:

Taking Medication

- Local pharmacies can often arrange to deliver medication directly to your home. This means that you do not have to remember to collect it.
- Dosette boxes are useful to remind you whether or not you have taken your medication. There are different variations available to purchase dependent on your specific needs. For example some dosette boxes have an alarm to alert you when it is time to take your medication.



Being Away From Home

- It can be a good idea for you to keep a dose of medication with you at all times in case you are away from home longer than expected.
- If you are away from home and realise that you have forgotten your medication, local pharmacies will often be able to help by contacting your GP and dispensing an emergency dose of medication.

Useful Documents and Publications

The Scottish Dementia Working Group have published a 'Travelling With Dementia' booklet and short film. This includes a number of useful hints and tips for using different modes of transport. Information regarding the Scottish Dementia Working Group can be found at www.sdwg.org.uk



Alzheimer Scotland provide a card for people with dementia. This can be used to help others understand what they can do to help. This is available from Alzheimer Scotland offices.



You can find out more information on any aspect of dementia by phoning the Alzheimer Scotland free 24 hour helpline on 0808 808 3000, or visit www.alzscot.org for more information.

Notes





Notes

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