

Activities at home

Guidance for people with dementia and those who support them



Over the coming weeks and months we are all being asked to change the way we live our lives so that those who are at most risk of coronavirus are kept as safe as possible. For people with dementia and their families and carers this period of change will be unsettling. Not being able to go about your daily routine or undertake the activities you normally do can be quite stressful.

In collaboration with allied health professionals, we are preparing a range of information to help you through this time. Please call our 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000 and we will do our very best to help you.

Taking part in activities is important for providing a structure to the day, providing a sense of purpose and can help with maintaining your skills and abilities for longer. There are many different activities which can keep your mind and body active but please follow guidelines on hand washing. Here are a few ideas to consider.



Keep in touch

Stay in contact with friends and family as much as possible using your phone, email, Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp or the Zoom app. Ask your family and friends to send letters, cards, photographs, voice and video messages.



Keep active

Make sure you move around regularly throughout the day. Try to do gentle exercises several times a day as this is important for maintaining your fitness and strength. If you have a private outdoor area, use this if possible.



Activities at home

Try to continue activities at home. These could include reading, puzzles, jigsaws, singing along to music and creating a playlist, listening to your favourite radio programme, adult colouring in, looking back at old photos. Include relaxation activities such as taking a bath or doing a breathing exercise (see below).



Relax in 5 minutes by

- Concentrate on both breathing in and out
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Breathe in slowly and count 1 in your mind, breathe out slowly and count 1 again
- Next, breathe in slowly and count 2, breathe out slowly and count 2 again
- Continue this exercise until you reach number 10, and start back at 1



Sleep routine

A good sleep routine is important so try to establish a consistent evening routine (for example go to bed at a similar time, listen to relaxing music). Avoid tea and coffee in the late afternoon and evening. Ensure a dark and comfortable sleep environment.

Your interest checklist



It can be useful to think about activities that you enjoy; this may have been as part of your work role or any hobbies or clubs you were involved with. It can also be beneficial to try new things. You could use the interest checklist below to help generate thoughts and conversations around previous interests and new activity ideas.

Puzzles		Bird Watching		Jigsaws	
Music		Cooking/Baking		Educational activities	
Exercise		Digital technology		Pets	
Reading		Dancing		Relaxation	
Social connections		Writing		Sport	
Art		Crafts		Film	
Gardening		Radio		Other:	
Photographs		Television		Other:	
Singing		Table games		Other:	

Remember to enjoy taking part in the activity rather than the end result

Helpful tips to take part in activities in the home

- Make sure there is good lighting by being near a window or using brighter lightbulbs. Extra lighting such as lamps can also help
- Have a clutter free area and reduce background noise such as turning off the television
- If the activity is carried out while sitting down choose a supportive and comfortable seat. Both feet should be on the ground and hips should be slightly above your knees. Chairs with arms are much easier to get out of
- Make sure you wear your glasses or hearing aid if needed
- Consider the best time of day to take part in an activity. You might prefer to take part in exercise in the mornings and a relaxation activity in the evenings
- Don't pressure yourself to spend long periods of time on activities, short regular sessions throughout the day are equally as beneficial
- Set yourself realistic goals for each day as this will help to create a sense of achievement.



Helpful links

Connecting People, Connecting Support online is an interactive website designed by occupational therapists and designers, offering a space where people with dementia, family members and supporters can come together with a new theme of resources shared each week
www.connectingpeopleconnectingsupport.online

Royal College of Occupational Therapists Activity in Care Homes Toolkit offers best practice in supporting older people to enjoy daily activities.

www.rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/living-well-care-homes-2019/a-z-activities

24 HOUR



Alzheimer Scotland
Action on Dementia

Dementia

Helpline

Freephone 0808 808 3000
Email helpline@alzscot.org