

# Activities at home

## Guidance for people with dementia and those who support them



This information sheet has been written in partnership with occupational therapists and provides practical advice to help you to engage in your hobbies and interests. If you need more information, 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 and here are a few ideas to consider.



### Keep in touch

Stay in contact with friends and family as much as possible by meeting them if you can or 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.



### Activities at home

Carry out 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.

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

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

[www.connectingpeopleconnectingsupport.online](http://www.connectingpeopleconnectingsupport.online) - This is a website created by Occupational Therapists and designers where people can come together to explore ways to live well with dementia. There are 32 different topics with things to chat about, try, play and more!

**Royal College of Occupational Therapy 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](http://www.rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/living-well-care-homes-2019/a-z-activities)

**Digital Pool Activity Level guide** supports people to be fully engaged in activities and describes how to support the person. You can download a free copy here [www.qcs.co.uk/digital-pal-instrument/?random](http://www.qcs.co.uk/digital-pal-instrument/?random)

**24 HOUR**

**Dementia Helpline**

**Alzheimer Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

Freephone 0808 808 3000  
Email [helpline@alzscot.org](mailto:helpline@alzscot.org)