

Sometimes people living with dementia may display anxiety or agitation through fidgety hands. Signs may include pulling clothes or bedding, rubbing hands together, twisting fingers, wringing hands, and generally keeping hands in motion.

Keeping hands busy helps with fidgeting, but it isn't always easy to choose the right ones: there is no right or wrong way - whatever feels good is perfect, providing it is safe.

- Match the activities with the person's capabilities and cognitive function.
- Observe whether the person is becoming increasingly frustrated.
- Avoid overstimulating the person – try a new activity for only a few minutes to begin with.
- Focus on enjoyment as opposed to achieving a goal or completing a task.
- If it's more appropriate and enjoyable, let the person watch.

Ideas for Fidgeting Hands

- Help with daily jobs, not necessarily real jobs, but activities that mimic the tasks they used to participate in.
- Find some hand towels or face washers and ask for help folding them, then take away and commence again if appropriate.
- Smooth crumpled tissue paper – get some colourful tissue paper and crumple each piece. Show them the crumpled pieces and ask for help smoothing them.
- Organize paperwork – gather a stack of unimportant papers and ask for help organizing.
- Fiddle with paperclips or buttons – sort the different sizes or colours into separate groups.
- Organize the junk drawer – put the entire drawer on the table and ask for help in organising the contents.
- Shuffle and arrange a deck of cards – let them do whatever they wish with the cards, use nice looking cards for added visual stimulation.
- Stroke and fiddle with different textured materials or a soft fleecy blanket
- Brushing hair, foot or hand massage

Keep Familiar Items at Hand.

- Some people are comforted by keeping a familiar item with them, like a purse or wallet.
- Fill an old purse or wallet with a few dollars or coins, even expired credit cards.
- Fill the purse or wallet with some items, such as rubber bands, buttons, coins, keys, or a few dollars for rummaging at any time.

DIY Fidget Box *It's easy to make your own fidget box.*

- Fill a container with inexpensive odds and ends found around the home or bought from a cheap shop.
- Gather items in a variety of colours and textures, such as: things with zippers or Velcro closures, toys that wind up, stress balls for squeezing, brightly coloured plastic springs, a row of buttons sewn firmly onto a ribbon, a piece of soft fleece, or old keys on a keyring.

Fidget Blankets

- For a quick DIY fidget blanket with minimal sewing, start with a fluffy bath towel or large piece of soft fleece and securely sew on a variety of embellishments.
Browse the ready-made ones to get ideas and inspiration.

Hand Muffs

- Hand muffs are a type of sensory band, usually a type of glove or pocket with attachments both inside and out. These attachments provide a variety of elements the person can fiddle with and twiddle with their fingers.