

What is an "Activity"?

Activity comes from the word act, meaning "to do something", which may include things like outings, errands, and family events, but can also include the more mundane tasks of life, like doing the dishes, taking a shower or combing one's hair.

All the following are activities:

- *Activities of Daily Living* - includes eating, bathing, dressing, using the bathroom etc.
- *Instrumental Activities* - includes the more complex tasks like preparing meals, managing finances and general health care, shopping, and cleaning.
- *Sleep and rest* - sleeping is an activity too!
- *Leisure* - includes hobbies and attending sporting events, etc.
- *Social participation* – family and/or friends.

Thinking of activities not just 'events', but all the things we do in a day, you are supporting the person living with dementia to remain as engaged as possible. Establish which activities the person can - and would like to participate in, and decide what adjustments are required.

Benefits of Providing Purposeful Activities

- Even though helping the person as much as possible may seem a good strategy, it is possible to help too much. Instead of automatically doing or helping with a task, try adapting the activity to allow the person to do as much as possible, even though it may increase the time it takes to complete.
- Purposeful activities provide routine and structure to the day.
- Supporting a person to participate in everyday tasks and activities can boost mood and improve quality of life.
- Purposeful activities provide positive ways to use energy.

Adapting Activities

These strategies may help adapt activities to ensure the person feels successful.

- *Set-up* - think about how an activity can be adapted for the person to complete independently e.g. help with brushing teeth: put the toothpaste on the toothbrush and place it next to the sink, or in their hand.
- *Supervision* – Be there in the background ready to help if necessary: e.g. if washing the dishes is the task, you could set up the dishcloth, fill the sink with water and stack the dishes next to the sink. Prompt or assist as necessary.
- *Prompting* – If the person gets stuck, prompt the next step, or pass the object if needed, e.g. have clothes laid out on bed, point to the shirt, then pants once the shirt is on.

- *Direct verbal cues* – When prompting isn't enough, you may need to guide them through step by step in simple terms.
- *Physical assistance* – If the person requires assistance to complete the activity, slowly guide their actions e.g. while washing the dishes, you could put your hand over theirs and guide them to rub the dish with the sponge.

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| <p><i>Day-to-day Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold towels or face washes • Pair socks • Set the table • Make the bed • Sweep the floor • Prepare a meal • Wash and dry the dishes | <p><i>Outdoor Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a walk • Plant some flowers or vegetables • Water plants • Sit outside and enjoy sunshine • Visit a park • Rake leaves • Enjoy a picnic |
| <p><i>Indoor Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to music • Knit or organise a craft • Colour-in • Try chair yoga • Look at family photos • Watch a game of sport • Play a board or card game – checkers, chess, snakes and ladders, Connect 4, dominoes • Memory cards • Read a magazine or the newspaper • Do a jigsaw puzzle | <p><i>Sensory activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort pegs by colour • Untie rope knots • Match up nuts and bolts, or tighten screws • Open and close padlocks • Toss some sensory bean bags made with rice, sand and grains to each other. • Smell fresh flowers • Stroke an animal or differently textured materials • Rummage in a box containing things the person is interested in • Brush their hair • Give a manicure/pedicure |