

Alzheimer's Disease: Creative Activity Ideas To Enrich Home Care

Successful activities for persons with Alzheimer's support their sense of self and dignity—bringing out their skills, memories and habits—while minimizing skills that may be compromised due to the disease. Activities can also reduce behavior like wandering, agitation, anger, frustration, depression, or rummaging. Following are several activity ideas to support a person in the mid to late stages of Alzheimer's.

RUMMAGE BAG:

- Collect various small items to put into an opaque bag. Include items that would interest that particular person to keep his or her mind occupied and calm while looking through the bag and hopefully sparking conversation about the items.
- Consider including items the person obsesses over such as keys or a purse.
- If person loves to garden, include photographs of flowers or different types of gardens, packets of seeds, gardening gloves, etc.

MUSIC:

- Whether vocal or instrumental, playing music can help to create a mood, stimulate imagination, and be a source of great enjoyment.
- Eliminate competing noises by shutting windows and doors and turning off the television.
- Use live music, tapes or CDs rather than radio programs with commercials.
- Identify music that's familiar and enjoyable to the listener.
- Encourage clapping or dancing with the music.



OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Crafts such as knitting and crocheting are helpful for memory care because they present an opportunity to use old and new patterns with the mind and the hands.
- Personal chores such as dusting, sweeping, folding laundry and wiping off a table can make a senior feel needed.

ART:

- Drawing or painting allows a person with Alzheimer's to communicate without need of words.
- Create a collage or mural.
- Work on projects with family photos such as a memory book or family tree poster.
- Visit an art museum or look at a book of art together.
- Create homemade greeting cards.
- Finger paint.

CARD GAMES:

- Sort a deck of playing cards by color, number, or suit.
- Match educational flash cards that are the "same" or perhaps in the same "category".
- Play simple card games such as Old Maid or Go Fish.

REPETITIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN PROVIDE COMFORT:

- Fold clothes or towels.
- Sort coins.
- Tear lettuce for a salad or snap green beans.
- String Cheerios to hang outside for the birds.
- Sand wood.
- Polish shoes.

FOR SHEER ENJOYMENT:

- Blow bubbles.
- Arrange fresh flowers.
- Bake and decorate cupcakes or cookies.

At **Continuum**, we believe that scheduling appropriate daily enrichment activities can improve the wellbeing of a person with Alzheimer's as well as create a sense of belonging, a sense of self, and a sense of mastery. Contact us today to learn more about our specialized Alzheimer's and dementia care.

Sources: Alzheimer's Association, Chicago Tribune, eHow, Yahoo Voices