

ACTIVITY tips



MODIFY:

People with dementia can still enjoy the activities they have always enjoyed, just in different ways. For example, someone who always enjoyed cooking may be able to help with mixing, rolling, or dipping strawberries in dark chocolate. Someone who always enjoyed exercising can enjoy walking or simple chair exercises like marching and arm circles.

PERSONALIZE:

Not all activities will work for everyone. Some people may enjoy folding towels, while others may view the activity as pointless. Someone with dementia may enjoy watching sports games, while others may find it frightening or become agitated. Try different activities to find what works for your loved one.

KEEP ROUTINE:

Always try and keep a routine as much as possible, such as keeping the time for meals, personal care, and bedtime consistent.

BE PREPARED TO ADAPT:

Someone with dementia may enjoy an activity one day but not the next, or they may start an activity then not want to finish it. Someone with dementia may respond better to activities at certain times of day than other times. As the disease progresses, their ability and preferences will change as well.

HAVE A PURPOSE:

People with dementia often enjoy activities that make them feel like a valuable part of the household. Try having them help with chores, like sweeping and setting the table, or simple meal prep, like putting together homemade trail mix, salad, or making sandwiches.

DON'T CRITICIZE OR CORRECT:

If a person with dementia is enjoying an activity that seems pointless to you, it's okay to let the person continue as long as they are not harming themselves or someone else. Also, make an activity failure-free! Be patient and focus on the enjoyment of the activity, not the end result.

CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY YOU BOTH ENJOY:

When you have the time, do an activity with your loved one that you both enjoy! This can reduce caregiver stress. Examples could include coloring, baking cookies, or going for a walk.

PROVIDE HELP BUT ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE:

You may find someone with dementia needs help with a certain step of an activity but can then complete the rest of the activity by themselves. When explaining activities, be sure to use simple, easy steps.

MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS:

Try and keep the environment calm and limit background noise and other distractions.

ACTIVITY *ideas*



- Coloring with colored pencils
- Make cards to send to friends, family, or veterans
- Bake cookies
- Set the table
- Put a salad together for dinner
- Make fruit kabobs with strawberries, grapes, and bananas
- Make a fruit salad
- Make lemonade or tea
- Look through old photos
- Listen to music and sing along
- Dance to favorite music
- Play a card game
- Feed or watch the birds
- Go for a walk
- Collect leaves and flowers to press in a book
- Read the newspaper
- Sort coins
- Make a scrapbook
- Give a hand massage with lotion
- Make a family tree
- Sit on a park bench and enjoy nature or people watch
- Pick flowers for a vase
- Make homemade dog or cat treats
- Garden: Can be outdoors or a simple window garden
- Chat about family heirlooms
- Play a musical instrument
- Paint
- Have a picnic
- Make a collage
- Brush their hair
- Do a puzzle with larger pieces
- Share stories about friends or family members

Remember, these are just general suggestions, and every person is different. Try different activities and see what works.

For more information or support, email caregivers@cicoa.org.