Everyday Ideas for Caregivers

Communication
- Say the person’s name and approach slowly.
- Smile and make eye contact.
- Provide him/her personal space until he/she notices you.
- Keep the conversation simple.
- Show what you’re requesting, using verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Be patient. It could take 7 to 8 seconds for a response.
- Repeat what you said, if needed.
- Don’t correct or try to reason if there is confusion about people or past events. Talk about something else, like an enjoyable past event.
- There are no mistakes. Provide praise and encouragement.
- Remember that music can be a calming influence.

Hygiene
- Try to keep the same routine and build in lots of time for the task.
- Have all your supplies ready before you start.
- Use a calm, slow approach.
- Explain each step in simple terms.
- Use clothes that are easy to put on and lay them out in order.
- Purchase similar items of favorite choices.
- Give praise and allow him/her to do what he/she can.
- Offer to help if there is frustration.
- Try again later if there is resistance.

Bathroom Tips:
1. Use a picture or sign to identify the bathroom.
2. Make a clear path to the bathroom.
3. Visit the bathroom every 2-3 hours.
4. Take extra bathroom supplies when going out.
5. Reassure that accidents happen and that’s OK.

Mealtime
- Serve meals at the same time every day, when possible.
- Make meal time comfortable and peaceful.
- Serve foods with a variety of colors and textures.
- Provide only the utensils that are needed.
- Serve finger foods if utensils cause frustration.
- You may need to put the utensil in his/her hand and/or show how to use it.
- Serve foods one at a time and in a small bowl rather than on a plate, if needed.
- Play favorite music in the background.

24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900
**Pacing**
- Keep walkways clear and prevent falls with good footwear.
- Hold hands and walk together.
- Take a trip to the bathroom.
- Offer him/her a small food item or snack that can be carried while walking.
- Distract/redirect him/her with a calming activity and assurance of safety.
- Provide a mild pain reliever such as Tylenol in case of pain.

**Sundowning**
- Listen to and validate any increase in agitation or desire to go home.
- Allow time for expressing concern.
- Provide reassurance of safety and that you are not leaving.
- Offer a snack or something to drink.
- Turn on more lights and close the curtains.
- Engage him/her in conversation about favorite subjects.
- Ask for help with a meaningful task, something that reflects past interests.
- Take a trip to the bathroom.
- Take a walk or a drive.
- Listen to music that he/she enjoys.

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**Wandering**
- Keep a recent photo of the person for emergencies.
- Ensure the person always wears an ID bracelet.
- Enroll in the Alzheimer’s Association’s Medic Alert + Safe Return program.
- Keep doors locked with latches up high or install a keyed deadbolt.
- Consider installing alarms on the doors.
- Provide opportunities for exercise and simple household activities.
- Provide adequate rest periods and try to ensure that the person can get a good night’s sleep.
- Initiate activities during the time of day before his/her wandering usually starts.
- Ensure that neighbors and the local community are aware of the circumstances.

**Tips for YOU**
- Eat healthy, get plenty of rest and take time for yourself.
- Keep a good sense of humor.
- Do things for yourself that you enjoy.
- Share your feelings with a good friend or a local support group.
- For further support, contact:

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  414.479.8819 l fax
  800.272.3900 l 24/7 Helpline
  www.alz.org/sewi

  ![More tips on reverse](image)