

Everyday Ideas for Caregivers



Practical Tips to Support Those Caring for a Loved One with Memory Loss

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.

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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.

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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.

More tips on reverse

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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.

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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.

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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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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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414.479.8800 | phone
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