

A daily routine is helpful for you and your loved one with dementia. Your loved one may rely on you to make a daily plan, but you can involve him or her in the process. When you make a daily plan, focus on what your loved one can complete and avoid activities that are too frustrating.

Before reading the content on this page, it may be beneficial to review the following video(s) from the Office of Rural Health (ORH).

[Implementing a Daily Plan](#)

Length: 06:01 ([Link opens new window](#))

Now that Margaret has help, she can create a daily routine for Harold based on his tastes and lifetime habits.

Maintain a routine to reduce problem behaviors. Your loved one may need some time to rest throughout the day, so plan time for rest too. Keep your schedule in a place where your loved one has access to it. Remind your loved one to consult the schedule. This can reduce repetitive questions about the day's routine.

What to Include in Your Daily Plan

Focus on Activities you Both Enjoy

This might include activities that you have enjoyed together in the past or simplifying activities that have become too hard for your loved one to complete. Make sure your loved one feels successful and has fun completing the activity.

Housework or Tasks

Include your loved one in housework or tasks that he or she can finish. This will give your loved one a sense of purpose and accomplishment. It might be helpful to demonstrate the task first, then your loved one can follow along. Help them get started in the activity. Monitor the activity to decide if your loved one can do the activity alone or needs supervision.

Activities

It is important for your loved one to stay active. Activities can be in large groups, small groups, or individual. Keep in mind that it is okay to bend the rules for the activity because the important thing is that your loved one is participating, not that they are doing it "right."

Some activities your loved one may enjoy include:

- Household chores: setting the table, washing dishes, sorting and folding laundry, and sweeping the floor
- Cooking and baking: measure, mix, and pour ingredients; instructing on how to prepare the recipe; watching others cook in the kitchen
- Exercise: take a walk together, use a stationary bike, throw a ball back and forth, lift weights
- Music and dancing: play music, talk about the music playing, sing and dance to popular music, or attend a musical program
- Pets: feed, groom, walk, or hold a pet
- Gardening: water the plants, plant flowers or vegetables, prune the plants
- Visiting family, children, and friends: play a simple game, read stories or books, walk in the park, or go to school events
- Going out: favorite restaurant, park, or museum (remember to plan outings for the time of day your loved one is at their best)

Creating Your Daily Plan

While thinking of activities to participate in with your loved one, try to choose activities in a few of these general areas. Before trying out any activities, make sure they are safe for you and your loved one.

Physical Activities

- Walking
- Dancing
- Bowling
- Playing ball or Frisbee with a group



Social Activities

- Visits from family and friends
- Small parties
- Playing cards or bingo with a group
- Exercising with friends

Intellectual Activities

- Crossword and find-a-word puzzles (these are ok as long as they don't cause your loved one to get frustrated or agitated)
- Card games

Spiritual Activities

- Singing hymns
- Attending worship services
- Spiritual activities through a church or organization

Creative Activities

- Crafts (painting, drawing, pottery, crochet)
- Hobbies (building small toys, gardening)
- Adult coloring books

Sensory Activities

- Toys with zippers, buttons or velcro closures
- Lacing or stringing games
- Toys with interlocking pieces
- Peg boards or Lite Bright
- Stuffed animals or dolls

Work-Related Activities

- Some individuals with dementia will revert to when they were working and look for activities related to their past job
-

Sample Daily Plan

The following is a sample daily plan developed by the Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Center. This is a good example to refer to as you develop your own plan.

Morning

- Wash, brush teeth, get dressed
- Prepare and eat breakfast
- Have coffee, make conversation
- Discuss the newspaper, try a craft project, reminisce about old photos
- Take a break, have some quiet time
- Do some chores together
- Take a walk, play an active game

Afternoon

- Prepare and eat lunch, read mail, wash dishes
- Listen to music, do crossword puzzles, watch TV
- Do some gardening, take a walk, visit a friend
- Take a short break or nap

Evening

- Prepare and eat dinner, clean up the kitchen
- Reminisce over coffee and dessert
- Play cards, watch a movie, give a massage
- Take a bath, get ready for bed, read a book

Is your Daily Plan Helping?

Evaluate how well your routine works. Do you and your loved one need more routine or more variety in your day-to-day activities? Don't be afraid to change or to experiment with your routine. Pay attention to the process and not just the outcome of your routine. Take notes or keep a diary about how well your routine works. You might add this to your stress diary. Try varying the time of day or the order of necessary daily activities that are challenging or frustrating to your loved one.

Think about each activity that you do regularly. Can the most challenging activities be limited or eliminated? For instance, if your loved one dislikes bathing, you can think about reducing the number of times he or she bathes each week.