

Practical Tips for the Caregiver

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The Importance of Structure

- We all need a schedule
- We all need a stimulation
- We all need a purpose
- Understand when they are at their best.
Use that time of the day to schedule certain activities like doctor's appointments or daily exercise.



Setting up for Success

- Stimulation designed for dementia
- Living with dementia can be a time with uncertainty and stress.
- Creating an environment with the right set up, cues and stimulation can provide comfort, calm and control.



Right Activities ➡ Completion ➡ Self Esteem

Exercise (*walking, yoga, breathing*)

Music (*listening, watching, creating, discussing*)

Therapeutic (*pet, music, intergenerational*)

Brain Games (*crosswords, puzzles, lists*)



Different Types of Activities

- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Cognitive
- ▶ Hand & Eye coordination
- ▶ Sequencing
- ▶ Socialization
- ▶ Sensory
- ▶ Task oriented
- ▶ Stimulating
- ▶ Calming



Basic Principles for SSSuccess:

Simple - 1 to 2-step directions at a time.

Safe - Supervision, environment and materials.

Scheduled - Plan ahead and be consistent.



Completion of the activity is
not the goal...



It's the journey that's important!

Useful Tools

- Use a **whiteboard** to lay out the plan.
- Keep a **journal** to refer to after a period of time, this is especially helpful for doctor's appointments.
- Then, **predict** the routine and anticipate how to avoid it. This will help with reducing their anxiety and your stress.

Example: Restlessness and irritability every evening after dinner while you wash the dishes. Plan a long walk or put on his favorite music program right at the end of dinner to avoid this and wash the dishes later.



The Environment

- Lighting
- Noise
- The amount of people
- Perception of space
- Simple or routine can be challenging
- Temperature



Tips to Prevent Falls

- Pay attention to patterns
- Clear walkways, remove throw rugs and coffee tables
- Ensure there is proper lighting



Communication

- Provide the answers
- Provide clear and simple instructions
- Provide plenty of time and repeat if necessary
- Reassure and redirect



Reducing Caregiver Stress

- Stop and smell the roses...Literally!
Schedule the time to be alone and together.
- Use resources available: day care, home care, respite care and an assisted living community.
- Join a support group
- Enlist family and friends to help



Reducing Caregiver Stress

Keep active and involved.

Use your skills and give them the opportunity to use theirs for as long as possible.

If you don't use it, you lose it!

Tips to maintain skills and abilities:

- 1 - At their level
- 2 - Set up for success
- 3 - Accomplishment



**Use It
or
Lose It**

You're braver
than you believe,
stronger than you
seem, and smarter
than you think.

Winnie the Pooh



Questions?

Thank You!