

FUNCTIONAL FRIDAY

Importance of Daily Routines and Habits for People Living with Dementia

Living with dementia can make it difficult to start activities and maintain routines independently. However, well-established habits can be coached, which supports staying engaged in everyday activities.

Here are some tips to keep in mind to support a person living with dementia to stay involved in daily activities they need and want to do.

Make a plan for a daily routine, considering:

- Routines that the person used to do, and their preferences in those routines
- Current “best” times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening)
- Ways to allow for ample time
- Current waking/bedtime habits and any challenges (wanting to leave, trouble getting or staying asleep, awake/sleep times reversed like napping during day, up at night)

For any activity, break task down into simple steps and provide coaching to get started and stay engaged in each step

Routines to consider planning include:

- Waking up and getting dressed
 - Mealtimes
 - Household chores/activities
 - Leisure/hobbies
 - Rest time/relaxing activities
 - Ways to manage intermittent activities, such as appointments, visitors, etc.
- Give guidance using words, showing an action, and physically guiding a movement.
 - Always rely on a person's preferences and past interests to help figure out which activities may be appealing and what steps they can do with their current abilities
 - If a task is too overwhelming, allow extra time or break it down into more steps
 - "Doing with" a person is always preferable and more effective than "doing for"
 - Arrange the environment for success:
 - Write out daily schedule
 - Add pictures

- Keep objects used in same location (such as toothbrush, toothpaste, and cup always on bathroom counter by sink)
- Consider labeling drawers, cupboards with names or pictures of objects inside

RESOURCES

<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care>

Gitlin, L. N. & Piersol, C. V. (2014). *A caregiver's guide to dementia: Using activity and other strategies to prevent, reduce and manage behavioral symptoms*. Camino books.