

## 56 Things to do with the Person Who Has Dementia

1. Hang up colorful travel posters of the “old country”, National Parks, or other scenes of interest.
2. Pick up old magazines at rummage sales, LIFE...LOOK...POST... or other inexpensive ‘mementoes’ of the past.
3. Provide a list of proverbs, slogans, phrases, limericks to finish.
4. Offer Mother Goose Rhymes printed on large cards to read.
5. Provide word games...opposites, riddles, hangman (have a list).
6. Create a safe ‘junk’ drawer or box specific to interest.
7. Create a ‘memory box’ that can travel.
8. Place unwound yarn in a coffee can with a hole in the plastic cover, yarn can be pulled and wound into a ball.
9. Cut up pieces of rug yarn...sort by color.
10. Make pie crust from scratch or sticks...have person roll them out. Eat a pie that was baking during the above activity.
11. Match socks (a dozen pair of bright colors).
12. Take knots out of pre-knotted dish towels or tube socks.
13. Sort colored plastic eggs into empty egg cartons.
14. Fold old linen napkins, pretty towels, scarves.
15. Provide basket or case full of tiny baby clothes scented with baby powder to fold, caress, snap, button, tie, enjoy & remember!!!
16. Polish and sort silverware into a plastic tray. Sort large buttons, spools, nuts and bolts, plastic bottle tops, etc. Avoid items small enough to be swallowed.
17. Cut buttons off old sweaters, shirts, etc., (donated from a thrift shop). Use sandwich bags to “package” the button sets and return to thrift shop to be sold. A good recycling project for caregiver and persons with dementia.
18. File folders from past ‘work-type’ experiences. Example: invoices, canceled checks, sales slips, order blanks, ledger pages, old tax records. Set up an “office” for 15 minutes.
19. Create scrap books using page protectors, clear contact paper or photo albums with edges taped (3 hole binders work well as the pages can be removed and shared as a group program). *Use uncluttered and happy pictures.*
20. Assorted heavy duty zippers to zip & unzip.
21. Old fashioned tie-in the –back aprons with pockets for the women and nail aprons for the men with ‘safe’ stuff to ‘possess’ in the pockets (i.e., keys, wallet, handkerchief, notepad & Pencil, deck of cards, measuring spoons, etc.)
22. Provide a stationary bike or pedals for exercises.
23. Old fashioned carpet sweeper for pushing.
24. A nurf ball, sponge ball or balloon to toss around.
25. A putting green in the yard (plastic cup buried in the ground). Indoors make a masking tape circle on the floor. Also use an ice cream pail for a bean bag target.
26. Provide a gentle massage, foot soaks, and manicures.
27. Ask a friend or neighbor with a baby or pet to visit, especially if children and pets have been part of the individuals’ life experience.
28. Bird feeder...string cheerios on yarn threaded through with a blunt plastic needle.
29. Make frozen bread dough into ‘Bird Bread’ for the feeder. Bake frozen bread dough to eat while working on the project.

30. Unravel 2" x 4" pieces of cut up sweaters for 'stuffing'.
31. Develop a collection of empty food containers to be put on a shelf (cereal, salt & other spices, egg carton, butter, clean safe cans, etc.) to facilitate "shopping."
32. Develop a simple matching game of cards with pictures and words (easy to make with recipe cards).
33. Mount simple latches, knobs, hinges, slide bolts, hooks, and locks to small boards. Generally not more than 2 to 3 items to a board.
34. Use wooden puzzles of 12-16 pieces with adult themes.
35. Adult theme simple pictures to color or water paint, mount on tag board and display.
36. Pieces of PVC pipe cut into short lengths with assorted elbows and "t" joints to manipulate and assemble.
37. Lincoln log sets or a variety of other blocks are great for stacking or building.
38. Water paint using regular water paint paper and 8 basic colors.
39. Cut up old greeting cards (stiff paper is easier to handle). Can be glued onto tag board or just 'sort.'
40. Cut coupons...can put into used envelopes and file in a box or container.
41. Tear rags from old sheets, material, worn clothing (a common activity for persons from the present older generation to make rugs, bandages, garden rags).
42. Trace & cut familiar shapes...hearts, shamrocks, leaves...from colored paper.
43. Notebook and school pencil with some easy-to-read material (lists, numbers, short messages) to copy. This generation did copy or tracing work in school.
44. Old type clothes pins to sort, put together in pairs, or hang the wash (single line inside or out).
45. Nylon or cotton 'stockings' (not panty-hose) to 'roll' or 'tuck' and put into small cases.
46. Make "finger food" snacks. Frost graham crackers with vanilla or chocolate, fill celery with soft cheese or peanut butter, stick pineapple chunks...apple slices...grapes...orange slices...etc. onto toothpicks. Cut finger jello into squares Form popcorn balls with light syrup mixture.
47. Wrap coins into coin holders (always with supervision).
48. Have family/friends make audio cassette tapes or video tapes of familiar people, places and voices.
49. Blow bubbles using either a small or big wand.
50. Use decks of cards and dominos to invent simple games or just sort. Checkers can simply be used to match the colors on the board.
51. Stuffed animals are comforting...must be washable and safe.
52. Encourage domestic chores, such as dishes, dusting, watering plants, making beds, dust mopping, wiping surfaces, sprinkling cloth napkins and ironing with a child-type safe iron that only gets warm.
53. Polish shoes...cream polish and a rag for shining, good activity for men.
54. Old toasters, mix-master, or radio with cord cut off are great for dismantling with a screwdriver or pliers.
55. Provide a bag of assorted men's and women's gloves/mittens to sort and try on. Also, use colorful hats, costume jewelry, neckties, belts, bow ties and other safe accessories.
56. Make a photo album of family pictures copied on a copier to protect the originals. Label photos with names and relationship of resident or family member.