

Alzheimer Society

# Activity Ideas AT HOME

FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



## Isolation activities – Non-Wi-Fi based

These activities may help with the feeling of isolation. From the safety of our homes, we can remain cognitively stimulated and engaged. These may be fun to explore with your family and/or the person you are caring for.

### This document will include:

- Activities with everyday household items,
- Reminiscence therapy activities

It is important to remember that activities should be appropriate to the person living with dementia and reflect their interests. The activity may need to be modified and may require some trial and error. The activities should be a positive experience, which may be done through these strategies:

- **Prompting:** If the person is struggling and/or is becoming frustrated with not knowing what to do, offer cues or prompts. Also, offer reassurance and validation!
- **Allow extra time:** People living with dementia may take longer to do activities. Allow extra time to avoid any feelings of pressure or rush.
- **Be supportive:** The goal of activities should be for the person with dementia to enjoy their time, not for the activity to be completed correctly. Again, offer reassurance and validation!

## Activities with household items

- Folding towels
- Sorting socks
- Sorting cutlery
- Sorting coins
- Washing dishes (TIP! It may be helpful to fill a bucket of water and soap, place this on the kitchen table, add some dishes for the person to easily clean while sitting safely).
- Cut pictures out of magazines or old calendars
- Go for a walk and bird watch
- Listen to music and dance (TIP! If the person has balance issues, please consider dancing while seated) (Music is a very powerful calming tool!)
- Play “Name That Tune” (using music or humming) (use catchy tunes that the person will likely remember, play a portion of the song and ask them to guess what song)
- Guess the smell (use items that are easy to guess, such as lemons, strawberries, vanilla)
- Games like Bingo, crosswords, word searches, cards, dominos
- Easy cooking or baking (TIP! Avoid sharp tools or knives. Examples: cake, cookies, stirring lemonade)
- Create a bird feeder and watch the birds eat

- Colouring, painting, drawing
- Create birthday cards (using paper, markers, cut outs from magazines, etc.)
- Manicures or pedicures using your own nail polish
- Cut calendars into pieces for a puzzle
- Create an “All about me booklet” [https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/files/national/core-lit-brochures/all-about-me\\_booklet.pdf](https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/files/national/core-lit-brochures/all-about-me_booklet.pdf)

## Reminiscence Activities

(reminiscence is a powerful therapy where you prompt the person to access old memories and speak about them)

- Go through jewelry boxes and speak about the items
- Look through photos and/or photo albums, watch slide shows of photos
- Make a family tree
- Food reminiscence: What was the favourite meal from your childhood? What did you like about it? What ingredients were involved?”
- Work reminiscence: What was your first job? What was your role? Did you like it and why? What was your favourite job and why? What do you wish you could have tried as a job and why?
- Important memories reminiscence: What do you remember of your wedding day? Tell me about the day your first child was born. What was your favourite birthday memory and why?
- School reminiscence: Who was your favourite teacher in school and why? What was your favourite subject in school and why?
- Travel reminiscence: Where was your favourite place to travel and why? Where would you have liked to have visited and why?

## Sensorial Activities

### Easy Play Dough

#### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp cream of tartar 1 cup flour
- 1/4 cup salt 2 tbsp oil
- 1 cup room temperature/warm water

#### Directions:

Just mix. Add flour as needed if dough is too sticky.

To give the dough more interest and sensorial engagement you can:

- incorporate food coloring to make colors
- add herbs and spices for smell
- put in glitter or other textural items.
- Scented

### Non-toxic Edible Homemade Paint

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 2 3/4 cup cold water
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup cold water
- Small jars with lids for storing your paint (we find it easier to dip the paint out of teacups)

Food coloring

#### Directions:

- Mix cornstarch with 2 3/4 cups cold water to make a smooth paste in a saucepan until no lumps remain
- Meanwhile soak the gelatin in 1/4 cup water to soften until it's needed
- Cook cornstarch mixture over medium heat stirring constantly until mixture boils and turns clear(ish)
- Remove from heat and stir in gelatin mixture.
- Cool and divide into several different jars for various colors. Stir in food coloring until you have a pleasing color that is well blended.

This recipe makes about 3 cups of paint. Paint is thick, add water if a more liquid texture is desired. Works well on card stock paper. Use fingers or a paintbrush.



### Scented Sensory Cards

You can also explore a similar idea with different textures.

## Isolation activities – Wi-Fi based

These online based activities may help with the feeling of isolation. From the safety of our homes, we can remain cognitively stimulated and engaged. These may be fun to explore with your family and/or the person you are caring for.

### This document will include:

- Virtual tours
- Netflix recommendations
- YouTube Exercises for Seniors
- iPad or tablet activities

## Virtual Tours

Monterey Bay Aquarium in California <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>

The San Diego Zoo (California) Live Stream <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams>

NASA App (virtual reality experiences, audio tours) <https://spacecenter.org/app/>

Disney Land (California) Google Maps Tour [https://www.google.com/maps/@33.8120336,-117.9189703,3a,67y,294.13h,82.05t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sDelpK5A-dz6k1K\\_2fSXww!2e0!7i13312!8i6656](https://www.google.com/maps/@33.8120336,-117.9189703,3a,67y,294.13h,82.05t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sDelpK5A-dz6k1K_2fSXww!2e0!7i13312!8i6656)

Disney World Magic Kingdom (Florida) Google Maps Tour <https://www.google.com/maps/@28.418732,-81.5813006,3a,75y,326.9h,93.62t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1svlXS5W-lSh3-Op7hbptVCA!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>

Disney World Epcot Full Frozen Ride (Florida) Google Maps Tour <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8OHP9OriMA>

The Metropolitan Opera (The Met) (New York City) Live Stream [https://players.brightcove.net/102076671001/default\\_default/index.html?videoId=6142077196001](https://players.brightcove.net/102076671001/default_default/index.html?videoId=6142077196001)

The Eiffel Tower (Paris, France) Viewpoint [https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/tour-eiffel/sAHt5Gv4YGH84Q?sv\\_ing=2.294697006132574&sv\\_lat=48.85816565109427&sv\\_h=127.30778508186896&sv\\_p=-19.888108757781055&sv\\_pid=Pe03wIAND2EexK9ITcxm0w&sv\\_z=1.0000000000000002](https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/tour-eiffel/sAHt5Gv4YGH84Q?sv_ing=2.294697006132574&sv_lat=48.85816565109427&sv_h=127.30778508186896&sv_p=-19.888108757781055&sv_pid=Pe03wIAND2EexK9ITcxm0w&sv_z=1.0000000000000002)

The Sydney Opera House (Sydney, Australia) Tour [https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/sydney-opera-house/KgGPW2YWtcHpBg?sv\\_ing=151.2135034733324&sv\\_lat=-33.85845058282505&sv\\_h=8.999&sv\\_p=-13.299999999999997&sv\\_pid=opBj2MqN2Mk4yX5QdZPYDw&sv\\_z=1](https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/sydney-opera-house/KgGPW2YWtcHpBg?sv_ing=151.2135034733324&sv_lat=-33.85845058282505&sv_h=8.999&sv_p=-13.299999999999997&sv_pid=opBj2MqN2Mk4yX5QdZPYDw&sv_z=1)

The Taj Mahal (New Delhi, India) [https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/taj-mahal/UwGKcX7FFM5U4g?sv\\_ing=78.04199578168942&sv\\_lat=27.17376226664116&sv\\_h=10.796493883396181&sv\\_p=3.2636150332274667&sv\\_pid=vQAmRxAVGgXXQmPcT8d0cQ&sv\\_z=1.0000000000000002](https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/taj-mahal/UwGKcX7FFM5U4g?sv_ing=78.04199578168942&sv_lat=27.17376226664116&sv_h=10.796493883396181&sv_p=3.2636150332274667&sv_pid=vQAmRxAVGgXXQmPcT8d0cQ&sv_z=1.0000000000000002)

The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Washington) Virtual Tour <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour/current-exhibits>

The Museum of Modern Art (The MoMa) (New York) Virtual Tour <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/sophie-taeuber-arp/swKioHhYqZoLw>

The Royal Botanical Garden (London, England) Virtual Tour [https://www.google.com/maps/place/Royal+Botanic+Gardens,+Kew/@51.4787438,-0.295573,3a,90y,196.08h,106.51t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipPmLp2CCLNNeI9mnxT-KJ\\_PiKQaAaEHZ6H-YP\\_D!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipPmLp2CCLNNeI9mnxT-KJ\\_PiKQaAaEHZ6H-YP\\_D%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-10-ya159-ro-0-fo100!7i8000!8i4000!4m5!3m4!1s0x48760dc5605b3443:0xd16f914f6291fb7e!8m2!3d51.4787438!4d-0.295573](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Royal+Botanic+Gardens,+Kew/@51.4787438,-0.295573,3a,90y,196.08h,106.51t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipPmLp2CCLNNeI9mnxT-KJ_PiKQaAaEHZ6H-YP_D!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipPmLp2CCLNNeI9mnxT-KJ_PiKQaAaEHZ6H-YP_D%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-10-ya159-ro-0-fo100!7i8000!8i4000!4m5!3m4!1s0x48760dc5605b3443:0xd16f914f6291fb7e!8m2!3d51.4787438!4d-0.295573)

Easter Island (Chile) Virtual Tour <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/4wXhfs-0ooroMQ?hl=en>

## Netflix Resources

(the options are endless, but here are a few)

- Bob Ross: Beauty is Everywhere (calming painting tutorials)
- Chill with Bob Ross (calming painting tutorials)
- Planet Earth
- Our Planet
- Jeopardy
- Cooking shows
- The Big Family Cooking Showdown
- Storage Hunters
- My Next Guest with David Letterman
- Classic movies that are calming and enjoyable!

## YouTube Seated Exercises for Seniors

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BcPHWGQO44>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaYDK\\_LH\\_uk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaYDK_LH_uk)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91ABO4utqkA>

## iPad or Tablet activities

- Jigsaw puzzle apps
- Solitaire apps
- Colouring apps
- Music playlists