

A carer's checklist

Caring for someone with dementia can be challenging. Dementia can affect a person's personality and mood, and make them feel confused or increasingly forgetful. This checklist has been created to help those caring for a person living with dementia, to ensure they can give the best possible care.

Think about their life story

While you may have a lifetime of happy memories together, regularly taking time to have discussions about their life as they recall it can help you to build a picture of their preferences, lifestyle, history, likes and dislikes. This can enable you to care for them according to their preferences and supports the person in expressing themselves by talking about their experiences.

See the person rather than the symptoms

It can be hard to see past the symptoms of dementia. But thinking about the person rather than the symptoms can help to maintain their identity and dignity. Build on their strengths and abilities to find ways to compensate for any losses brought about by dementia.

Access to outside space

Being outdoors provides the opportunity for exercise, fresh air, relieves tension and anxiety and offers personal space for reflection and privacy. Being outside stimulates the production of vitamin D, helping to maintain healthy muscles and bones. It also offers stimulation in the form of different colours, textures and natural smells and sounds.

Create a safe and supportive environment

People with dementia can get confused in their environment no matter how familiar, so it's a good idea to make everything easily recognisable. Specially adapted environments can maximise a person's independence and enhance their self-esteem. Make sure the person you're caring for can move around safely and enjoy their environment to the full. The use of colour contrast can help surroundings to stand out - try painting handrails, doors and furniture in different colours. Appropriate signage (pictures can be better than words) can also help inside the home.

Prompt happy memories

Surrounding a person with photos or images that trigger some of their favourite memories may also be helpful. Try creating a memory box, filled with favourite photos or belongings, or place other favourite memory triggers in display cabinets around the house.

Products can help

There are also lots of products available that can help a person living with dementia. For example, some people may appreciate clocks with larger faces or a notice board to help with their memory. Pill boxes with a compartment for every day of the week can help those taking medicines, and safety systems like gas detectors can add peace of mind. Mobility aids and products to help with independent living like kettle tippers and other adapted kitchen tools can help people continue participating in household activities such as cooking and cleaning, making a huge difference to their confidence.

Further information on caring for someone with dementia can also be downloaded from the [Anchor website](#).