



Home adaptations for people with dementia

Home modifications for people with dementia must take into account the physical changes, cognitive deficits and behaviors associated with dementia — memory loss, wandering, pacing, stumbling, rummaging, incontinence, sleeplessness, disorientation, confusion, agitation, fear of shadows and reflections. Safety is of paramount importance and access usually has to be limited or controlled. The home modifications should provide a calm, safe and comfortable home environment where a person with dementia can perform the activities of daily living to the best of his abilities. The changes may also help limit anxiety and stress for both the person with dementia and the caregiver.

Wandering

- Install a home alarm system
- Install bells or buzzers on exit doors
- Add dead-bolts and chain locks to exit doors
- Install locks that take two or more steps to operate
- Place locks higher than usual, near top of the door
- Install invisible door locks
- Install alarms on bedroom doors
- Install a portable motion detector in the bedroom or near exits
- Keep yards fenced and locked
- Keep outside lights off at night
- Disguise exit doors with curtains or posters

Disorientation

- Simplify the environment — remove distracting objects
- Mark doors to reduce confusion
- Post signs, symbols, and pictures on doors to identify the purpose of rooms
- Mark a clear path from the bedroom to the bathroom
- Use a contrasting colored toilet seat
- Place colored tape around the edge of the toilet and tub
- Place a commode or urinal in the bedroom
- Remove from sight open containers that may be mistaken for toilets
- Leave a night light on in the bathroom
- Install bright, even lighting throughout the home
- Create turning points in dead-end hallways

Pacing

- Create a track or path for safe pacing
 - Push furniture against walls
 - Remove low pieces of furniture and standing objects
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Agitation

- Remove or cover mirrors
- Keep curtains drawn at night

Perceptual problems

- Remove glass tables
- Place decals on glass sliding doors and windows
- Outline steps with brightly colored paint or non-skid tape

Safety

- Limit access to one or more rooms
- Limit access to basements
- Install a gate in front of stairs
- Remove clutter from rooms and hallways
- Secure cords and wires
- Remove sharp objects
- Put plastic plugs in unused electrical outlets
- Attach thermostat covers
- Remove or lock away hazardous materials
- Close off fireplaces
- Remove small kitchen appliances from countertops
- Install a separate power switch for the stove
- Install a child-proof lock out of sight at the top of the refrigerator
- Remove control knobs from stove, oven and inside the refrigerator
- Remove locks from bathroom door
- Remove medicines from the bathroom
- Store medications in a locked or out-of-reach cabinet
- Remove sink stoppers

Source: www.howtocare.com

*Note: The recommendations and products discussed in this presentation are not necessarily appropriate or safe for all situations. Each situation should be analyzed individually by the appropriate experienced professional(s).