

# Activities to Do with Someone Who Has Alzheimer's Disease

Most of the days of our lives are filled with activities. Those activities might be related to work, family, friends and volunteerism. Those elements of our lives add dimension, meaning and enjoyment. Throughout the disease course, activities play a key role in maintaining a good quality of life. While the activities may shift and change through the disease, it is important to recognize their significance and value. They hold the potential of reducing depression, improving sleep, prolonging physical abilities, improving appetite and reducing agitation. They can also provide pleasurable moments with our loved ones and support continuing connection. Those individuals who are in the early stage of Alzheimer's are likely to experience only minimal impact on their typical schedule and activities, but as the disease progresses, cueing and support in engagement in activities might be required. Remember a person wants to help, to be needed, and sometimes encouraging participation is a bit easier when the individual is asked to help do this task with you because you are bored or need help. Don't forget to thank them for their assistance and company. The following is a list of potential activities to get you started:

1. Sorting activities. Can be buttons, poker chips, the colors or shapes of puzzle pieces, jewelry, nuts/bolts, playing cards, etc.
2. Yard work such as raking leaves, weeding garden beds, planting seeds, watering grass.
3. Kitchen chores such as drying and putting silverware away.
4. Polishing silver.
5. Walk.
6. Toss a ball or balloon volleyball.
7. Color — there are adult themed coloring books from such companies as Dover and Attainment.
8. Visit a pet store.
9. Schedule friends to visit. In middle and later stages, often works best when there is some structure to the visit for example working on a puzzle together, or looking at a set of pictures.
10. A person may not be able to plan, prepare and serve a whole meal, but what piece of that task can he/she still do, set the table, stir the pudding, tearing lettuce for salad, so encourage them to do that piece. Additionally, some meal preparation activities can have exercise potential such as mixing meatloaf or kneading bread.
11. For those for whom faith plays a role, pray for others.
12. Sing familiar songs.
13. Take a car ride.
14. Make snow ice cream or homemade ice cream.
15. Enlist in household chores such as sweeping, dusting or setting the table.
16. Read stories or articles aloud.
17. Ask questions that encourage fuller conversations when they share a memory.
18. Finish quotes, sayings and faith scripture.
19. Roll yarn into a ball.
20. Paint pictures.
21. Feed birds or ducks. Fill bird feeders.
22. Tear up junk mail.
23. Arrange fresh flowers.
24. Pick greens.
25. Write or dictate letters to friends or family members.

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26. Sand wood.
27. Manicures, hand and foot massages.
28. Wipe off patio furniture.
29. Make and distribute May baskets.
30. Fit game pieces together.
31. Dance.
32. Talk about and draw garden plans.
33. Brain games.
34. Cut out paper dolls.
35. Put together model airplanes or cars.
36. Fold clothes/towels.
37. Make plastic canvas ornaments.
38. Look at pictures in National Geographic, Birds and Bloom, garden catalogs or other heavily pictured magazines or catalogs.
39. Work together to make something with a distinct smell like popcorn, stewed apples, cinnamon rolls.
40. Clip coupons.
41. Look at/sort family pictures or old postcards.
42. Make valentines for family members or others in long term care settings.
43. Exercise, even if chair exercise, as they are able.
44. Cook an old family recipe.
45. Make up stories. Look at timeslips.org for ideas.
46. Consider modifications of prior enjoyed hobbies and interests such as going to golf course and hitting balls rather than playing 18 holes. Clean golf clubs or balls.
47. As feelings live through the disease, dolls and stuffed animals can offer both security and extend another opportunity to share love and care.
48. Watch/share a bifolkal kit borrowed from the library (in Johnson County available at the Cedar Roe library. Also available in the KCMO and Midcontinent library system. Can also be requested through interlibrary loan). Go to [www.bifolkal.org](http://www.bifolkal.org) to look at topics.
49. Plan a menu together.
50. Watch dvd's of old comedy routines. As sustained attention and memory to follow movies and tv shows are diminished, programs such as slapstick comedy and music programs that do not require following a plot extends opportunity to enjoy television.
51. Sit outside. Whether a park, your backyard or in your car with window rolled down watching a cow herd. There is something calming about being outside.
52. Make a ginger bread house.
53. Some Wii games are appropriate.
54. Play musical instruments.
55. Make and create art with edible clay.

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## How to Contact the Alzheimer's Association – Heart of America Chapter 1.800.272.3900 • [alz.org/kansascity](http://alz.org/kansascity)

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