



Engagement & Activities That Promote Purpose

As care partners, it is easy to imagine the “perfect day”, “perfect activity” or “doing things right”. This often comes from viewing life through the lens of “before Alzheimer’s or dementia”, which ultimately leads to frustration and stress. We need to dismiss thoughts of “perfection” and “doing it right” as those can get in the way of creating memorable experiences with your loved one.

Here are some suggestions for making everyday activities more meaningful and enjoyable for you and your loved one:

- Everything is an activity. It’s easy to look at activities as “events”, however most anything can be considered an activity if it engages your loved one in safe and positive way.
- Turn everyday activities into something exciting. Asking your loved one for help makes them feel needed. Playing music in the background can turn an everyday routine into something special.
- Find ways to include your loved one in as many things as possible. Even if they can’t participate like they used to, look for ways to make the situation something they can experience. Feeling left out and isolated is devastating.
- Provide positive reinforcement as praise and recognition always makes things better.

***People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel. --Maya Angelou***

- Be flexible in your expectations. Don’t criticize or correct the person. The focus should be on your loved one participating and enjoying what they are doing. As long as there is no harm or danger involved, it’s okay if they do something in a different way.
- Focus on the abilities your loved has instead of abilities that have become diminished.
- Not everything will work and that is okay. Give yourself permission to try new things or modify activity ideas you read or hear about from others. The most important thing is to provide activities that are of interest to your loved one.
- Pay attention to what your loved one enjoys. It can be as simple as enjoying a cup of coffee, looking through a magazine or watching a favorite TV show.
- Pay attention to the time of day, as your loved one may be more involved at certain times of the day.
- Help get the activity started, as it may be difficult for them to self-start. You can also model the activity, allowing them to watch step-by-step.

During this time of social distancing and being isolated from friends and loved ones, we have provided activity ideas for our current situation with COVID-19. The activities cover a range of abilities from early stages to late stages in the disease. Please note the ideas below can be implemented as presented or used to spark ideas for activities specific to the interests and abilities of your loved one.

***“Unfortunately for me, much of what I plan to do is dependent upon
others’ cooperation that day.” -- Richard Taylor***



Animal / Nature Lovers

- * Brush/groom the cat
- * Feed the dog or cat
- * Fill the bird feeder
- * Watch a nature movie/DVD
- * Listen to music with nature sounds
- * Take a scenic drive
- * Plant flowers / seeds can
- * Garden and yard work

Calm, Comfort and Reminiscing

- * Listen to comforting, soothing music
- * Go for a walk
- * Look at photos
- * Rub lotion on your loved one's hands (lavender hint: the scents of citrus, vanilla, and peppermint can stimulate one's appetite)
- * Paint with non-toxic watercolors
- * Draw or color
- * Tell your loved one that you love them
- * If able to watch TV, watch a favorite movie
- * Create albums or scrapbook of photos, newspaper clippings, cards, etc.
- * Tell your loved one you're glad you have this time with them
- * Make time for moments that matter

Connecting with Friends and Loved Ones

- * Talk with friends and family virtually using FaceTime, Skype or Zoom
 - o Use these virtual platforms to also have lunch or dinner with your family and friends
- * Write letters and/or cards to friends and family
- * Ask friends and family to send your loved one cards, letters and pictures
- * Make homemade greeting cards

Food

- * Have a "cookout" inside with hot dogs, hamburgers, baked beans, and potato chips
 - o S'mores can be made in the microwave
- * Fix their favorite meal and have them help prepare the meal
- * Pack a picnic basket and have a picnic in your backyard (or in their current living facility)
 - o You can also put a blanket down on your living room floor and have an indoor picnic
- * Enjoy a cup of coffee, tea, or favorite beverage together
- * Make root beer floats
- * Make your own sundaes
- * Look through a cookbook and pick a recipe to make together
- * Bake muffins, cookies, or bread



Physical Activity

** Physical activity is beneficial for both physical and mental health and can improve quality of life through all stages of the disease. However, be mindful and show care in selecting activities that are not beyond your loved one's current abilities and health situation. If your loved one has not taken part in any formal exercise for a period of time or has health / balance issues, please seek medical advice from your physician or medical provider before beginning any new physical activity. Ask their physician / medical provider about any special considerations related to these health concerns, if applicable:

- Heart problems
- High blood pressure
- Unexplained chest pain
- Dizziness or fainting
- Bone or joint problems that exercise could make worse
- Balance problems
- Shortness of breath or breathing problems
- Frequent or history of falls

Physical activities can include:

- * Walking (even just across the room)
- * Gentle stretches while sitting
- * Yoga
- * Dancing
- * Outdoor activities (see list under "Animals/Nature Lovers")
- * Backyard activities such as badminton, croquet, horseshoes

Religious / Spiritual

- * Watch a church/spiritual services online. This is also an opportunity to watch church services in other cities and states.
- * Sing favorite hymns
- * Say a prayer together
- * Read favorite poems or from favorite book
- * Listen to meditations, including guided meditations

Below is a list of virtual tours and events for museums, zoos, and aquariums across the globe (www.goodhousekeeping.com):

Museums

- **The Louvre:** You don't have to book a ticket to Paris to check out some of the famous pieces in the world's largest art museum. The Louvre has [free online tours](#) of three famous exhibits, including Egyptian Antiquities.
- **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum:** The works of Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian, Jeff Koons, and Franz Marc are just some of the 625 artists whose work are a part of the Guggenheim's [Collection Online](#).
- **Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History:** Move at your own pace through the 360-degree room-by-room tour of [every exhibit in the museum](#).
- **Van Gogh Museum:** You can get up close and personal with the impressionist painter's most famous work thanks to [Google Arts & Culture](#).
- **Getty Museum:** Los Angeles's premiere gallery has [two virtual tours](#), including "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry," which is a closer look at food in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.



- **The Vatican Museum:** The Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, and Raphael's Room, are just some of the sites you can see on the [Vatican's virtual tour](#).
- **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum:** Madrid's must-see art museum has the works of some of the continent's most celebrated artists like Rembrandt and Dali [available online](#).
- **Georgia O'Keeffe Museum:** [Six virtual exhibits](#) are available online from this museum named for the "Mother of American modernism."
- **National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City:** Dive into the pre-Hispanic history of Mexico with [23 exhibit rooms](#) full of Mayan artifacts.
- **British Museum, London:** The Rosetta Stone and Egyptian mummies are just a couple of things that you're able to see on a [virtual tour](#) of the museum.
- **NASA:** Both Virginia's [Langley Research Center](#) and Ohio's [Glenn Research Center](#) offer online tours for free. Also, you can try some "augmented reality experiences" via [The Space Center Houston's app](#).
- **National Women's History Museum:** Have a late International Women's Day celebration with [online exhibits](#) and [oral histories](#) from the Virginia museum.
- **Metropolitan Museum of Art:** Though the Met Gala was cancelled this year, you can still have a peak at The Costume Institute Conversation Lab, which is one of the institution's [26 online exhibits](#).
- **High Museum of Art, Atlanta:** This museum's popular online exhibits include ["Civil Rights Photography"](#) — photos that capture moments of social protest like the Freedom Rides and Rosa Park's arrest.
- **Detroit Institute of Arts:** Mexican art icon Frida Kahlo is the focal point of two of the four available [online exhibits](#).
- **Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:** The Golden Age of Dutch art is highlighted in this museum which includes the work of [Vermeer and Rembrandt](#).
- **National Museum of the United States Air Force:** You can't take a ride in Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential airplane, but you can check it out, in addition to other military weapons and aircraft, online in the Air Force's [official museum](#).
- **MoMA (The Museum of Modern Art):** New York's extensive collection is available for [view online](#).
- **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:** The [16 virtual exhibits](#) include a special section on 21st Century Designer Fashion.

Zoos and Aquariums

- **The Cincinnati Zoo:** Check in around 3 p.m., because that's the time the Zoo holds a daily Home Safari on its [Facebook Live Feed](#).
- **Atlanta Zoo:** The Georgia zoo keeps a ["Panda Cam"](#) livestream on its website.
- **Georgia Aquarium:** Sea-dwellers like African penguins and Beluga Whales are the stars of this aquarium's [live cam](#).
- **Houston Zoo:** There are plenty of different animals you can check in on with this [zoo's live cam](#), but we highly recommend watching the playful elephants.
- **The Shedd Aquarium:** This Chicago aquarium shares some pretty adorable behind-the-scenes footage of their residents on [Facebook](#).
- **San Diego Zoo:** With what may be the most [live cam options](#), this zoo lets you switch between koalas, polar bears, and tigers in one sitting.
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium:** It can be Shark Week every week thanks to live online footage of [Monterey Bay's Habitat exhibit](#).
- **National Aquarium:** Walk through tropical waters to the icy tundra in this [floor-by-floor tour](#) of the famous, Baltimore-based aquarium.