

# Dementia during COVID-19: Tips if you have Dementia or you are a care-partner

No. 5

Feedback we have received from clients is around the need for meaningful activities to do while in lockdown. Here are some simple, everyday things that you can do at home, whether you are a person living with dementia alone or you are supporting someone with dementia. Be realistic. Break activities into steps if necessary. Trial and error is okay.

## BE CREATIVE

Take photos together and make a collage. Make greeting cards. Make a scrapbook or memory book. Write a poem together. Have an afternoon tea party. Make a family tree poster, an advent calendar. Write a letter/email/card to a friend or family member. Make paper butterflies/easy origami. Colour-in an adult colouring book. Trace and cut out autumn leaves. Make a collage from junk mail/magazines.

## IN THE KITCHEN

Make homemade lemonade/ginger beer. Bake bread. Bake an apple pie or simple dessert. Ice a cake/biscuits. Make ice cream or milkshakes. Pop some popcorn. Make sandwiches, cut them with cookie cutters. Cook a favourite family recipe together, perhaps a "retro" Kiwi one.

## HOUSEHOLD TASKS

Polish the silver/brass. Water houseplants, in the bath or shower tray. Take care of the fish tank. Unravel old knitted garments.

## HANDS ON

Give and receive a hug. Rub in hand lotion, massage. Give a manicure/pedicure. Brush or comb another's hair.

## QUIET ACTIVITIES

Play card games (simplify rules as appropriate). Keep a journal/diary together. Do the Wordbuild in the newspaper or online. Play Os and Xs. Play Hangman/Snowman. Do a jigsaw or other puzzle together. Look at pictures in a travel book and look at photos and mementos from your own travel. Watch a favourite DVD or TV show.

## INVOLVE MUSIC

Listen. Sing old songs. Play favourite songs and clap/tap the rhythm. Dance. Watch concert/music videos.

## WORK WITH NATURE

Make a bird-feeder to hang outside (see recipe over page). Or put bread/birdseed out for the birds. Feed the ducks. Pick and arrange fresh flowers or use dried ones.

## CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE

Discuss favourite books or characters. Dig a little deeper when memories start coming. Ask about brothers and sisters. Interview them about their life. Talk about great inventions using pictures from books. Discuss famous people using photographs of them. Remember a favourite summer. Talk about a favourite hero/a favourite pet/first car.

## SORTING ITEMS

Stamps. Buttons (colour/size). Nuts and bolts. Different types of greeting cards eg birthday/Christmas. Playing cards by suit. Socks.

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Rake leaves. Plant seeds indoors and outdoors. Water the garden/outdoor pots. Stack firewood. Throw frisbees. Wash outdoor furniture. Sweep the deck, verandah/paths. Eat a picnic lunch outside.

If you think someone in your household is developing signs of COVID-19 phone your GP or contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

We all benefit most when we have a sense of wellbeing, which often comes from knowing that we still have a meaningful role to play and have been able to make a contribution, be it to our society, our local community, or our own current 'bubble' and household. The activity below can be enjoyed by family members in a bubble working together, or by an individual who is confident about following the instructions. It has been broken down into steps, enabling a couple working together to decide which tasks each person can realistically achieve and contribute.

### Make a bird-feeder

#### **Ingredients:**

A pack of inexpensive mince  
6 – 10 slices of stale bread  
At least two large bowls  
Several small plastic containers,  
with lids, suitable for the freezer  
Birdseed (optional)  
Gladwrap  
Large spoon for mixing

#### **Method:**

1. In one bowl make breadcrumbs (they don't need to be too fine).
2. Tip mince into the other bowl and mash it up.
3. Add birdseed (if using).
4. Start adding some of the breadcrumbs and mix them into the mince.
5. When all the breadcrumbs have been added, if the mixture is too dry add a small amount of water to help combine it.
6. Line each of your plastic containers with Gladwrap, ensuring it extends over the edges – (this helps when removing the frozen bird-cakes).
7. Fill each plastic container with the mince mixture, pressing it in firmly. Put the lids on.
8. Freeze until you are ready to feed the birds. Place on a bird-feeding station, wedge in the crook of a branch, put into an old onion bag if you have one (or something similar) to hang from a tree, or nail to a fence-post. Try photographing the birds as they feed.

**For some gentle exercise to do together go to <https://vimeo.com/409327310/5b7221d10a> for the latest exercise video from Dementia Canterbury.**

## WE ARE IN LOCKDOWN LEVEL 4 (Level 3 from Tuesday 28 April)

### Remember the basics for avoiding Covid-19.

- Wash hands regularly or use hand-sanitisers
- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces
- Stay in your bubble
- Stay at home, but if allowed to go out, stay in your neighbourhood
- Keep your (physical) distance, minimum two metres (length of a broom handle).

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For advice or support from Dementia Canterbury please contact us:

**PHONE:** 0800 444 776 or 03 379 2590

**EMAIL:** [admin@dementiacanterbury.org.nz](mailto:admin@dementiacanterbury.org.nz)

**WEBSITE:** [dementiacanterbury.org.nz](http://dementiacanterbury.org.nz)

The New Zealand Government's website for information on COVID-19 is [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

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