

10 Visual Cues That Support Safety and Independence

TO HELP A LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA



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If you're caring for a person with dementia at home, you may be looking for ways to support them in living as independently as possible. Research shows that visual cues are tools that can help keep people safe and oriented in their environment.



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For someone in the early stages of dementia, visual cues might involve labeling items or making reminder lists, but as dementia progresses, reading and comprehension become more challenging. As a result, pictures may be a more effective way of providing helpful information.

Even those without dementia often experience age-related vision changes, including depth perception, peripheral vision and the amount of time it takes for one's eyes to adjust between light and dark. To help your loved one's mobility, consider installing different types of lighting to assist with wayfinding.

Making a few simple changes in your loved one's environment may enable them to remain more independent for longer.

Here are 10 easy and affordable ways to incorporate visual and physical cues.

- 1 Turn off lights in areas you don't want your loved one to enter. Darkness discourages people from entering.
- 2 Position your loved one's bed so there's a direct line of sight to the bathroom. This can help them find their way when they wake up.
- 3 Install nightlights in the bathroom over the sink and toilet to make them easier to find at night.
- 4 Hang a photo of a toilet by the bathroom door, a photo of someone washing clothes by the laundry room door, and so on.
- 5 Use photos to indicate where items are stored. For instance, place a photo of dishes on the cabinet door where you store plates and bowls, and a photo of silverware on the drawer where you store utensils. Do the same in the bedroom for clothing and shoes.

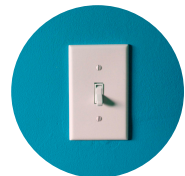


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- 6 Place a photo of someone washing their hands or brushing their teeth by the sink to help remind your loved one to do those tasks.
- 7 Move door locks up and out of sight to prevent your loved one from going in and out unsupervised.
- 8 Move the thermostat so it's not at eye level or tuck it behind a door to prevent your loved one from changing the settings.
- 9 Place arrows on walls or floors with paint or tape to remind your loved one what direction to go in.
- 10 Use paint colors to create contrast. For instance, a white light switch on a white wall may be hard to see, but a white light switch on a blue wall is much more noticeable. If you don't want to repaint, purchase a switch plate in a contrasting color.



While dementia presents challenges, visual and physical cues are an easy way to support your loved one's safety, comfort and independence.



Discover More Ways to Help Your
Loved One in Our Tip Sheet,
Caring for Someone with Dementia.

VIEW THE TIP SHEET