

# About you: Keeping involved and active

This help sheet describes the importance of keeping involved and active and suggests ways you can do this.

## Changes

Keeping involved and active are some of the many ways to stay healthy and live well with dementia. If you are experiencing changes in your memory or thinking, you can still enjoy activities, but you may go about them differently.

To maintain your wellbeing and keep active, consider:

- asking for support from family, friends or community groups if you are unable to do activities on your own
- rediscovering activities and hobbies you used to enjoy
- trying out new activities.

## Making activities easier

Keeping involved and active in the things you enjoy is extremely important. If activities become challenging, you might be able to modify them.

Talk with family and friends about ways to make activities easier.

Ideas that might help:

- If you feel unable to make a complete meal, invite a family member or friend to cook with you. Or try doing some parts of preparing the meal, such as peeling vegetables, setting the table or serving the food.
- If you play tennis and have trouble keeping score, ask your opponent or team partner to score, or not keep score at all.

## Physical activities

Physical activity is important for maintaining fitness and for keeping muscles and joints flexible.

Exercise releases feel-good chemicals in your body, which can help reduce depression and anxiety.

You might choose activities such as:

- walking
- gardening
- mowing the lawn
- golf
- bowls
- tennis
- exercise classes
- stretching exercises at home
- yoga
- tai chi.

## Activities to look after your mind

There are many ways to keep your mind active by engaging in activities that exercise the parts of your brain that are functioning well.

Depending on your abilities, you may enjoy:

- reading
- crosswords
- playing word games and apps
- maths exercises or games
- doing jigsaw puzzles.

Keeping involved in daily activities around the house can also be a way to keep the mind active.

## **Creative activities**

Being creative is a fun way to express yourself. Creative hobbies might include knitting, embroidery, woodwork, sewing, painting, drawing, playing a musical instrument or listening to music.

Ideas to consider:

- Go back to a hobby you have not had time for.
- Take up a new hobby.
- Ask a family member or friend to help you get started.
- Invite someone to work on a project with you.
- If hobbies are becoming challenging, try making them simpler. For example, use easier patterns for knitting, sewing or embroidery.

## **Social activities**

Staying social can help your skills and memory. It can also make you feel better about yourself and improve your sleep and wellbeing.

- If you are a social person, it is important to keep this up as much as possible.
- If you are not very social, consider ways to socialise, if you feel comfortable doing so.

Being social might involve spending time with family and friends; it may also involve participating in:

- community groups
- senior citizens' clubs
- card, games or coffee groups.

Some people living with dementia find too much noise or activity can make them feel anxious or confused. Rather than being in a large group at social gatherings, you may prefer spending time with one or two others.

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality relates to anything that gives life meaning or peace. It is important to keep enjoying these things, because spirituality can be an important strength in living with dementia.

For you, spirituality may mean:

- religion
- meditation
- enjoying art
- watching a sunset
- walking along a beach
- spending time with family.

If you do have a religious involvement, but find it overwhelming going to your place of worship, a representative may be able to visit you at home. Or there may be a quiet time to visit.

## **A sense of humour**

Keep laughing and find opportunities to laugh. Sharing your sense of humour is an excellent way of releasing tension and releasing feel-good chemicals in the body.

## Dementia-Friendly Communities

Dementia-Friendly Communities is a program that aims to build understanding, awareness and acceptance of dementia in the community, and support people living with dementia to continue engaging with activities that are important to them.

Consider learning more about the program to find community spaces and events that are inclusive to people living with dementia.

## Additional reading and resources

- Personal stories: Living well with dementia  
Visit: [livingwellwithdementia.org.au](https://livingwellwithdementia.org.au)
- Dementia Australia library service  
Visit: [dementia.org.au/library](https://dementia.org.au/library)
- Dementia Australia support  
Visit: [dementia.org.au/support](https://dementia.org.au/support)
- Dementia-Friendly Communities  
Visit: [dementiafriendly.org.au](https://dementiafriendly.org.au)

### Further information

Dementia Australia offers support, information, education and counselling.

**National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500**

**For language assistance: 131 450**

**Visit our website: [dementia.org.au](https://dementia.org.au)**