



A Gentle Daily Personal Care Routine

A simple daily rhythm for carers and families

Structure, gentleness and small comforts

♥ **Nicole** dementiaonline.org

Practical guides for families and carers

Why a daily routine helps

A predictable rhythm to the day brings comfort and reassurance to a person living with dementia. Familiar steps in a familiar order reduce anxiety, support independence, and give both of you small anchors to hold on to.

This gentle routine is a starting point. Adapt it to what your loved one enjoys, and to the pace that suits them today. Some days will flow easily; others will not. Both are alright.

Gentle reminder: *Move at their pace, not the clock's. A routine is a rhythm to return to — not a schedule to enforce.*

Morning

- ☐ Open curtains and let in natural light.
- ☐ Greet your loved one warmly using their preferred name.
- ☐ Offer a drink of water before breakfast.
- ☐ Assist with using the toilet if needed.
- ☐ Wash face and hands.
- ☐ Brush teeth or clean dentures (or after breakfast).
- ☐ Brush or comb hair.
- ☐ Shave if appropriate.
- ☐ Apply moisturiser if needed. Natural moisturisers help ageing skin keep some elasticity instead of drying and splitting. If time will be spent in the sun, apply sunscreen.
- ☐ Encourage dressing in comfortable clothes and stable, comfortable shoes.
- ☐ Eat breakfast together.
- ☐ Take morning medications.

A relaxed start to the day often sets the tone for everything that follows.

Gentle reminder: *Pre-warm the bathroom before a shower, and warm the towel and clothes if possible. Have everything ready before they go in — this small preparation makes bathing feel safe and comforting.*

Mid-morning

- ☐ Gentle walk outside.
- ☐ Read the newspaper together.
- ☐ Gardening.
- ☐ Look through family photographs.
- ☐ Listen to favourite music.

- ☐ Fold the washing.
- ☐ Simple household tasks.
- ☐ Morning tea.

Light activity helps maintain mobility while opening up natural opportunities for conversation and connection.

Lunch

- ☐ Encourage fluids.
- ☐ Eat together whenever possible.
- ☐ Allow plenty of time.
- ☐ Check that dentures or glasses are comfortable (and clean).

Never rush meals.

Afternoon

- ☐ Quiet activities.
- ☐ Reading.
- ☐ Jigsaw puzzles.
- ☐ Family visits.
- ☐ Watching birds.
- ☐ Television or a movie.
- ☐ Rest if needed.

Late afternoon is often when fatigue increases, so quieter activities usually work best.

Evening

- ☐ Dinner.
- ☐ Evening medications.
- ☐ Toilet before bed.
- ☐ Wash face and hands.
- ☐ Brush teeth or clean dentures.
- ☐ Change into nightwear.
- ☐ Reduce fluid intake in the evening to prevent needing the toilet through the night (unless they are dehydrated). Leave some water on the bedside table.
- ☐ Gentle conversation or favourite music.
- ☐ Bedtime at a consistent hour.

A calm evening routine may help reduce late-day confusion and restlessness (sometimes called sundowning).

***Gentle reminder:** Routines are for reassurance, not rigidity. If something isn't working today, let it go and try again tomorrow. Your presence matters more than perfect timing.*