

Good to go

A guide to
dementia-friendly
days out



For family carers

Welcome



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Foreword from Dr Nori Graham



A diagnosis of dementia brings challenges both to people with the condition and to their carers. But many of those affected, especially now the condition is being

diagnosed earlier, can for many years, continue to experience a good quality of life with a great deal of fun and enjoyment. This book provides a number of excellent ideas for ways carers and people living with dementia can share pleasure by going on outings away from home.

Increasingly, people living with dementia are diagnosed earlier and are able to talk about how they would like to spend their time. Doing things and sharing time

together can be highly enjoyable because even if the memory of the outing is almost immediately forgotten, the pleasurable feelings will often remain.

It is important to remember that the person with dementia is still the person he or she always was. Family carers are in a particularly good position to make the most of outings because they hold such a valuable store of information about their loved ones, their past history and their personality traits. They can use this knowledge in planning activities to make them as successful as possible.

Physical activity is good for everyone. It can play a part in preventing diseases like hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and cancers. In addition, there is

increasing evidence that it can also help to prevent and slow down the progression of dementia. Physical exercise and getting outdoors reduces loneliness and social isolation both for people with dementia and for their carers. For people with dementia, it is probably the most effective and certainly it is the cheapest drug on the market.

So I really welcome this book. It makes an invaluable contribution towards helping carers plan activities with their loved ones using practical and straightforward tips. The people who have contributed to the guide have great experience working with people with dementia and they have also drawn from the experiences of the people they care for and their family carers.

As a former Chairman of the Alzheimer's Society and of Alzheimer's Disease International, I know how important it is for people with dementia as well as those caring for them, to share how best to do things in order to enjoy as good a quality of life as possible. This book will be an essential guide for those who are looking for ways to give not just their loved ones, but themselves, opportunities to take exercise as well as to broaden their horizons.

Dr Nori Graham
Non-Executive Director
Care UK

About this book

Pauline's introduction



This book not only shows how important it is for those living with dementia - and their carers - to get out and about; it explains how to plan trips and how to make the most out of every outing, big or small.

For me, the secret is little and often. Just a ten minute walk around the block is an outing and will provide you both with a much-needed change of scenery. You don't have to hurtle down to the coast at the first sign of some summer sun or do a weekly trip to a museum to have fun; a walk around the local park can be just as fulfilling (not to mention much easier to plan!).

When I talk to carers, I encourage them to try and enjoy the great outdoors as often as they can. Soaking up the sun in your own back garden, bird watching or getting outdoors for a picnic can all have huge

physical, social and emotional benefits for people living with dementia. It can have the same benefits for carers too.

As you read this book, just remember every person living with dementia is an individual. Do things that will be familiar to your loved one. Give a few different activities a go and don't panic if one doesn't work. You will find places to go, and things to do, that you both enjoy.

Our goal is to make sure you are 'good to go'. Keep your outings short and simple and do the things that you think you will both enjoy. Outings might be different now; but they can also be more rewarding than ever before. We hope this book will show you how.

Pauline Houchin
Head of Care and Clinical Services
Care UK

“It is good that dementia is finally being treated as a serious condition for both sufferers and carers, but it is still not fully understood until one is affected.

As a carer, one feels one should be doing more, but the frustration and continual taking over responsibility for everything saps one’s energies.”

A family carer and friend of Care UK

Chapter one

It's good to go



If you're caring for a person who is living with dementia, it's likely that supporting that person in getting up, dressed and eating a meal can feel like a triumph.

So the idea of a day trip to the seaside, or even to tea with old friends, can simply feel too difficult.

Understandably, many carers, and the people living with dementia for whom they care, fall into a routine, sticking to what they know and the places where they feel safe. After a while, the risks of leaving home can seem to outweigh the benefits, so you just don't go.

But it's worth remembering that even the smallest change of scene can bring huge enjoyment to you and the person you're

caring for. However, whatever you choose to do, it's important to build in lots of flexibility, so if it doesn't work, it doesn't matter.

As well as our own experiences at Care UK of caring for thousands of people living with dementia, research shows that being busy, inspired and enthused really improves the quality of life for someone with dementia – as well as those around them.

In this book, we share practical tips and suggestions for getting out and about and why it really is **'good to go'**.

"Residents are always very animated on their return from a trip out and even the quieter personalities become more alive!"

Roz Ingate, Carer, Mills Meadow

"I really enjoy all of the trips out and I am really looking forward to going on my holidays with other residents and the staff."

A resident at Hadrian Park



10 reasons why it's good to go

Physical benefits

1 Studies show, keeping active can actually slow down the progression of dementia symptoms.

2 Dementia can affect strength, balance and coordination. Activities like walking and gardening can help people to **maintain strength and mobility which helps to prolong independent living.**

Did you know?

Research has shown that regular exercise can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's by up to 40%. For those already living with dementia, it has been shown to slow down the progression of the condition.



3 **Leading a physically active life is good for everyone** and it's the same for people living with dementia. Regular exercise will help to improve sleep patterns, build up appetite and even improve memory – all of which can be affected by dementia.



Emotional benefits

4 Getting out and about can provide a fantastic distraction from dementia symptoms. **Light, wind, temperature changes, different sounds and smells** all help to occupy the mind, which can bring some peace for people living with dementia.



7 It is easy to forget that some people living with dementia may lose the ability to recall days and months. Getting out into nature and feeling the summer sun on their faces, or the cold winter wind in their hair, will give those living with the condition **a sense of time and place**.



5 In some instances, **regular light exercise** outdoors has been shown to reduce the need for prescription medication.

6 Most people find regular trips out do lift their spirits. **Access to nature** has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.



8 Spending time outdoors can help people to **recall emotional memories** of playing outdoors as children, or of tending a much-loved garden. This can be invaluable when factual memories are fading. It can also create new experiences for those living with dementia – and their carers – to enjoy.



Social benefits

9 Trips out can give people a sense of belonging, friendship and kinship – as well as a sense of purpose and accomplishment. None of these feelings are easy to achieve for someone living with dementia - but are essential for their overall wellbeing.

"Trips really do bring residents out of themselves and it gives them a sense of achievement."

Barbara Scott, Deputy Manager,
Cheviot Court



10 Shared activities can help build a bond between someone living with dementia and their carer. A wife walking with her husband in the park, like they used to, or a father enjoying time at the pub with his son, can rebuild a closeness that has been affected by the challenges of dementia.

Chapter two

Get set, go





“My father preferred to stay at home and became anxious when out, so trips tended to be essential ones – for health problems and the like.” **A family carer and friend of Care UK**



“Sometimes a resident may get a little nervous, because things change in the outside world. However, when they come back from a trip, they talk about it to everybody at the home and the pleasure shows on their faces.”

**Irene Sweeney, Activities Coordinator,
Collingwood Court**

Many people tell us their loved one doesn't like going out anymore; that the dementia makes them anxious and any break in routine causes stress.

Every person is different and dementia affects people in very different ways. Physical health can also play a part in someone's ability – and desire – to leave their home.

Only you will know if your loved one is likely to enjoy a change of scene, but in most cases the benefits of getting out and about from time to time will outweigh the challenges. You may find the steps in the next few pages helpful for planning outings.

*“...the pleasure shows
on their faces.”*



Top Tips

from Care UK colleagues
across the UK

1. Build on what you know

If it becomes more difficult to communicate verbally with a loved one, take clues from their behaviour and their past and current interests. Keep it simple and do things in short bursts, perhaps heading to the local park for ten minutes or to the local shop.

“The trick is to plan the day around your loved one now, not your loved one before they began living with the disease. They might have loved the noise of a football stadium a few years ago, but the din could cause anxiety now. Live in the moment and you should find an outing you can both enjoy.”

**Katherine Foley, Home Manager,
Prince George House**





2. Involve your loved one

"We always ask residents where they want to go. It is important that those living with dementia retain a sense of independence for as long as possible, so involve them in the planning of an outing whenever you can."

**Bridie Laughlan, Activities Coordinator,
St Vincent's House**

*"...helps to rebuild
confidence."*

"If someone is showing no interest in going out, try showing them some visual aids – like a magazine with images of a park. Talk about a photograph, what they can see and ask if they would like to go there. This might not be a quick process but in many instances it will trigger some reminiscence and gain their interest after a time. You may find they even ask you to go to that place eventually, meaning that the outing helps to rebuild confidence and a sense of self."

**Gary Baker, Activities Coordinator,
Clara Court**

3. Set the scene

“People living with dementia will sometimes have no understanding of time, so telling them that you are going out next week, tomorrow or even later that day will be meaningless. Prepare them for the outing with visual aids, such as a calendar or a photo of the intended destination, as well as words.”

**Andrew Potts, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**

“Before you leave the house, create the right mood and atmosphere. If you are going for a walk, get the wellies and coats out at least an hour or so before you are planning to leave and put them somewhere prominent. Have pictures of the place you are visiting around the room and get ready slowly.

If you are going for a picnic, encourage your loved one to help by buttering the bread, or wrapping the cakes. Let them see you pack bags and help out whenever, and however, they can.”

**Matthew Cox, Home Manager,
Field Lodge**



4. Go with the moment

"If your loved one just doesn't want to go out when the moment comes, accept it. If you push them, they won't enjoy it and neither will you. Respect the views and feelings of the person living with dementia and move on. You can go next week instead. At least you have done the planning already!"



**Julie Culham, Activities Coordinator,
Tall Trees**

"Be flexible. If one day your loved one tells you that they want to go for walk, do whatever you can to try and make it happen there and then. You don't know when they will ask again. When you are looking after someone living with dementia, it is really important to go where the mood is taking you."

**Matthew Cox, Home
Manager,
Field Lodge**



If things don't go to plan, it's not a wasted opportunity. If you've packed a picnic, for example, eat it at home. If you were planning to visit the local park to go birdwatching, can you do it in the garden instead?



"Try not to get stressed if things don't go well, you learn from mistakes and how you could improve on things next time."

**Julie O'Connor, a family carer and
friend of Care UK**

5. Start small



“Don’t make your first outing too big or too extravagant.”

**Elaine Carruthers, Centre Manager,
Orchard Day Centre**

“Each time you go out, try and go a little further. Start small and do more as your confidence grows.”

**Julie Culham, Activities Coordinator,
Tall Trees**

“If your loved one is a little nervous (or if you are), go to the same place a few times so that you both feel safe. Once you are really enjoying those outings, try venturing further afield.”

**Gary Baker, Activities Coordinator,
Clara Court**

And if the person you’re caring for wants the outing to stay small, that’s okay. If it’s what they want, don’t try and force things.

6. Persevere

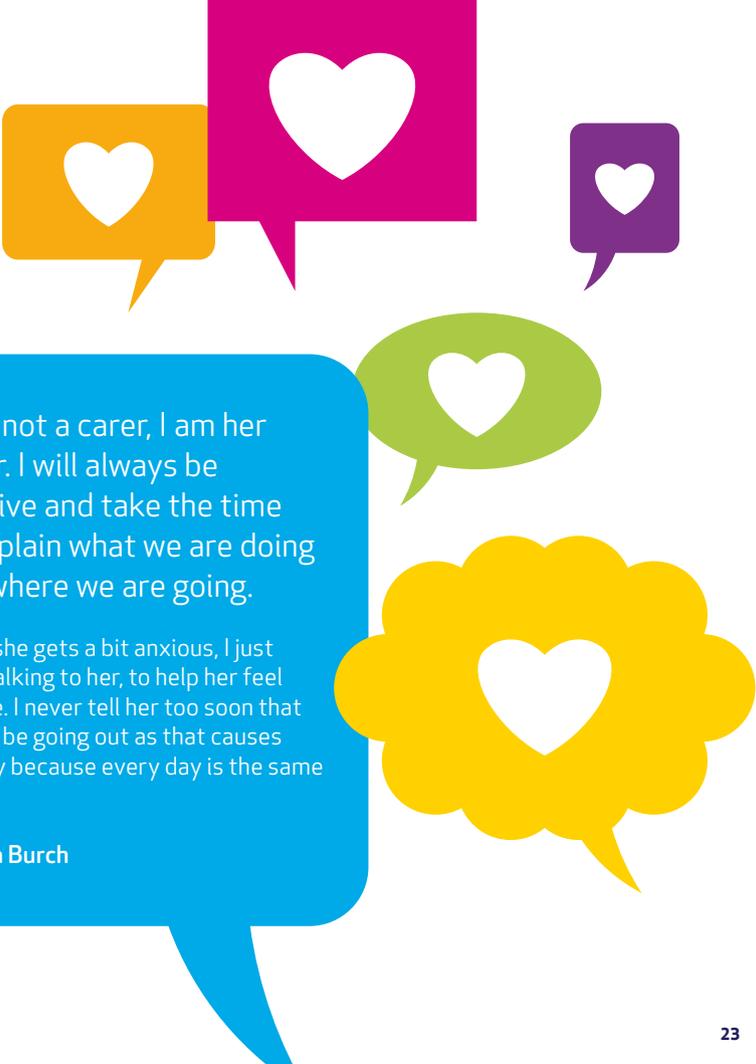
“Just because something didn’t work once, doesn’t mean that it won’t work again. Remember, every day is different when you are living with dementia.”

**Pamela Norman, Home Manager,
Stanecroft**

“You may have to encourage a loved one a lot to start with but don’t get disheartened if they seem disinterested in the activity. Come back it to later or try something different.”

**Gary Baker, Activities
Coordinator, Clara Court**





"I am not a carer, I am her sister. I will always be positive and take the time to explain what we are doing and where we are going.

When she gets a bit anxious, I just keep talking to her, to help her feel at ease. I never tell her too soon that we will be going out as that causes anxiety because every day is the same to her."

Sandra Burch

7. Think safety in numbers

“If you are going out for the first time, don’t try and do it alone. Call in help from a neighbour, friend or relative. You’d be surprised at how many people are only too happy to help.”

Julie Culham, Activities Coordinator, Tall Trees



8. Identify yourself

“For peace of mind, put an identity card into your pocket, and that of your loved one. Your companion’s card should explain they have dementia and yours that you are caring for someone living with dementia. List emergency contact numbers on both, and ideally include your photo on your loved one’s card and their photo on yours. This way, if you are taken ill, or if your loved one becomes separated from you, you will both get the help you need. You are unlikely to use either card but many carers like to know that they have prepared for the worst.”

Mark Harrison, Dementia Specialist, Care UK

Some pharmacies and private companies, like MedicAlert, make bracelets and necklaces with identity details on. There are more details in ‘Other sources of advice and support’ at the back of this guide, or do an online search.



9. Stay in touch

Take a mobile phone with you. It doesn't need to be a hi-tech phone either. Store emergency contact details on it and don't be afraid to use them. You can also store an 'in case of emergency' (ICE) number on your loved ones mobile phone. Type the acronym ICE, followed by a contact name e.g. ICE – Paul, into the address book, so if in the unlikely event that you become separated from your loved one, you would be contactable. Just remember that you will need to take off any locks on the mobile phone e.g. PIN, to ensure people can access it. Age UK has a product of their own – but there are plenty of others worth looking at too.



10. Avoid mishaps

When it comes to incontinence, get advice from your GP surgery. Incontinence can be caused by many different conditions so it is wise to seek medical advice, and your surgery will refer your loved one to a district nurse for an assessment.

Queuing for the toilet, or managing alone, can be a problem. Don't be afraid to explain your loved one's predicament to people and ask to go to the front of the queue. In addition, sign up to the Radar National Key Scheme (NKS) and you may be able to get a key that will allow you access to the 9,000 NKS accessible toilet facilities in the UK.

These toilets can be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations across the country. To find out more call

020 7250 8191.



Chapter three

Be prepared



Preparing in advance will help you both to get the most out of your trip and remove many of the worries you might have about taking your loved one out.

Think about the things you'll need, what the weather might do and how the journey might be and plan accordingly. And then

there's the venue. The following tips should help you pick the perfect place for your outing.





Top Tips

from Care UK colleagues
across the UK

1. Choosing the right venue

Some restaurants and cafés are very dementia friendly – having a quick chat with a staff member when you arrive will help them to understand that they can help you by giving you a table in a quiet area or prioritising your order and clearing plates away quickly.

Some venues will offer discounts for people living with a disability. Others might have wheelchairs you can hire for the day, or even adult changing facilities. They might also be able to enhance your day out with hands-on experiences that aren't widely advertised.



2. Take a trip down memory lane

If you are struggling for inspiration, or want a change from the tried and tested cafés and parks, then what about a trip that relates to your loved one's past jobs or hobbies?

Do, however, remember your loved one's condition now, and think about how their job or hobby may have changed. If revisiting a workplace means exposing them to loud noises or lots of modern technology, it's worth finding an alternative trip to go on.

"Take people to a place that feels familiar, where they can remember."

**Matthew Cox, Home Manager,
Field Lodge**



"If somebody used to play golf regularly, but can no longer play, ask a golf club if it is possible to walk around the course and watch others play, or arrange for a day when the people who they used to play golf with are at the club, so that they can have a pint in the bar with them after a round."

**Elaine Carruthers, Centre Manager,
Orchard Day Centre**



3. Pick a slower pace of life

Some people living with dementia may find it difficult to process information, so simple and quiet places are good destinations for outings. Learning venues, like local museums, are often good as people can approach them at their own pace. The key is to find stimulating places and activities that don't involve too many challenges or

choices. Avoiding crowds and noise is important too. Dementia can also affect concentration so it's worth doing activities in short bursts. There's no need to plan a jam packed day of different experiences.



4. Enjoy the great outdoors

For most people, the best place to be is outside, enjoying and exploring nature. Outdoor and nature-based activities appeal to many people and will help those living with dementia both emotionally and physically. Activities can range from being guided around a park to a woodland walk. There are also organisations who take outdoor activities for those living

with dementia to a whole new level. Visit **dementiaadventure.co.uk** to find out more about their impressive work.



“Being outside in the fresh air, exploring the world, can have great benefits for health and wellbeing.”

**Andrew Potts, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**

5. Plan the journey

Some people with dementia can become bored or uncomfortable on longer car rides whereas others enjoy watching the world go by and listening to music. You'll know what your loved one can manage and therefore which destinations are accessible. Plan the journey, however long it may be. Are there places to stop for a break?

6. Timing is everything

Some people living with dementia may become anxious in crowds and traffic jams. Travel outside of rush hours and, if you can, use a satnav that tells you in advance of problems ahead and will find you another route. Avoid visiting popular places on weekends and in school holidays.



7. Whatever the weather

The weather needn't put you off. Being able to feel the wind on their face or smell fish and chips in the air gives those living with dementia a sense of space and time and a welcome distraction from their symptoms. Get out and about in autumn and winter – not just spring and summer.



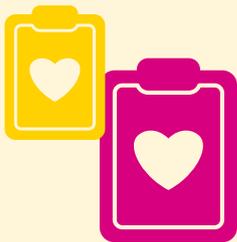
"It's ok to go outside when it's cold and raining. Some people love the autumn and winter more than summer and spring. Wrap up warm and embrace the experience."

**Rose Elliot, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**

8. Do a recce

It's always worth checking out a new venue in advance of your trip as it'll help you to relax and put your mind at ease ahead of your outing. You're the best judge of what your loved one can and can't manage. But here are some things you may want to look out for:

- ✓ Disabled parking close to the entrance
- ✓ Accessible toilets
- ✓ Accessible footpaths (this doesn't always mean wheelchair friendly)
- ✓ Suitable café or restaurant facilities
- ✓ Quiet places to eat or rest



"A 'dementia friendly' place can be anywhere suitable to the person - some people are sensitive to noise, some to bright lights - it's as individual as the person. Once a recce has been carried out, you will know what a suitable place looks like!"

Jacqui Sanderson, Activities Coordinator, Wellmeadow Lodge



9. Venue inspiration

There are thousands and thousands of places to go and things to do with people living with dementia. Here are some suggestions to help you to find the perfect place to visit.

- **Start small.** A trip to your local park is the perfect way to start. And it may be all your loved one wants to do.
- **Is there a tea dance in your area?** These traditional events usually include tea, cakes and a raffle and are very popular. These are often listed in the back of local newspapers but you can find them online too. It's worth booking a place in advance.



- **Visit your local tourist information centre** for ideas of museums or historical places in your local area.
- **Enjoy a traditional afternoon tea.** Garden centres, historic homes and local hotels are all places that lay on afternoon teas that you can enjoy together.
- **Visit your local garden centre.** Many now have fantastic facilities and tend to be quieter – but just as entertaining – as high street shops.



- **Search online for a sensory garden in your area.** These have been specially designed to provide visitors with different sensory experiences, with scented and edible plants, sculptures, water features and winding walkways.
- **Memory cafés are a great way to meet other people** living with dementia, and their carers. You can just drop in unannounced. They usually meet monthly for a couple of hours. An online search should help you to find a local one.
- **Your local library may have a memory box for you to borrow.** These contain original objects, like ration books, vinyl records, photos and documents which will draw your loved one back in time. Spending a few hours reminiscing is a very comforting experience for people with dementia and is something you can do together.
- **Woods are a fantastic,** free resource and often overlooked as a day out. Go online and visit The Woodland Trust or The Forestry Commission to find nearby woods that you can explore together.

"I took a resident to the cinema and then for a Chinese buffet. When we got back to the home, he took my hand and said thank you for such a wonderful day. It gave him a sense of normality which is very important for people living with dementia."

**Julie Culham, Activities Coordinator,
Tall Trees**



- **Get closer to nature with The Wildlife Trust and The RSPB.** Visit wildlifetrusts.org or rspb.org.uk for dozens of ideas on places to visit and things to do.
- **Keep an eye on your local newspaper for reminiscence shows.** The Moonlight Theatre Company, for example, tours the country presenting hour long themed mini-musicals with vintage songs and dances.
- **Research has proved that being around animals** has many positive benefits for those living with dementia. Do you have a friend with a friendly dog, or is there a petting zoo nearby?

- **Day centres are great** for helping people who are living with dementia to have a change of scenery. They offer the chance to learn new skills and to participate in a range of activities from art and craft to dance.
- **Your local reservoir or nature reserve** is likely to have easy and flat walkways. Many have picnic areas too, so you could take a picnic and some bird seed for the ducks.





- **If you live by the coast, make the most of it!** Paddle in the water, take a stroll along the pier, eat fish and chips out of the paper and end the day with an ice cream.
- **Look out for The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain** in your library or local bookshop. It isn't dementia-specific but it does have lots of suggestions for accessible places to visit around the country. The guide is free to Blue Badge holders and is produced in association with Motability.
- **Rediscover our heritage.** English Heritage, National Trust and National Trust for Scotland properties have sites with good access and facilities. Their websites will tell you more, and there are phone numbers you can call if you need to ask questions.

10. Keep a record

"Use a little book to record all the places you visit. You'll have a useful reference guide for places that have been most enjoyable that you can visit again."



**Sylvia Payne, Activities Coordinator,
The Terrace**

"Seaside trips are always a favourite with our residents. We go to Southsea every year. The residents paddle in the sea and enjoy the feel of the water on their feet. We always take a video of it so we can relive the moment again and again."

**Ros Stevenson, Home Manager,
Whitebourne**





11. Be prepared

Every person's needs are different, and you know your loved one best of all. However, when you're packing for a trip, it can be useful to have a checklist of things to take.

- Tickets
- Money – cash and credit card
- Map/satnav
- Radar key for disabled access to toilets (see section in the back of this guide)
- Blue Badge
- Ample food and drink
- Identity cards/photos, for pockets
- Regular prescription medication
- Mobile phone (fully charged) with emergency contact numbers stored
- Suitable footwear
- Umbrellas and rain coats OR hat, gloves and scarves OR sun hats and sun tan lotion
- Camera/camera phone or camcorder



Chapter four

Coping with challenges





However prepared you are, sometimes things won't go according to plan. Every person living with dementia is an individual and the best approach to use will vary on the person and the situation. Below are some insights from our care home teams on what to do.

1. Reluctant to go home

"One of the most common problems is persuading a resident that we need to go home – even if they took some convincing to go on the trip in the first place! We talk to them to ascertain where they want to go or where they think they are going. They may be attempting to walk to a childhood home or may feel disorientated. Never argue with them.

Accept where they are in that moment in time and try again a short time later. If it's later in the day, explain that it will be dark soon and you need to be making your way home. Stay calm, confident and relaxed."

**Andrew Potts, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**

"If resisting the call to head home becomes an ongoing problem, avoid it. Plan circular walks, or allow plenty of time for the return walk. Allow more time for the next trip and provide a distraction or diversion. Don't insist that you have to go home. Explain what you are doing next – that you have people to visit, that tea is ready, or there are chores to do. Talking about the next trip can be effective too."

**Rose Elliot, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**



2. Stressful situations

“The world is a scary place and large crowds can be disturbing for someone living with dementia. If your loved one becomes distressed then keep talking to them and guide them away from the situation quickly to somewhere more peaceful. Stay calm and stay in control.”

**Andrew Potts, Dementia Specialist,
Care UK**

“Don’t forget the power of touch. If your loved one is agitated, put your arm around them, hug them or hold their hand. Guide them away from whatever is bothering them and don’t let go until they are ready.”

**Julie Culham, Activities Coordinator,
Tall Trees**



3. Separation anxiety

“Most people’s main worry when planning an outing is that they will become separated from their loved one. It is rare that this happens but if it does, stay calm. If you have prepared well for the trip, they will have an identity card in their pocket. Even if they don’t, the chances are that they are probably close by.

Speak to staff first and call your emergency contact second. Show people a picture of your loved one and retrace your steps. A good idea is to take a photograph of your loved one every day, so you can show people what your loved one is wearing. If you really are unable to find them and you think you need help from the police, call them. They are there to help.”

**Andrew Potts,
Dementia
Specialist,
Care UK**



Chapter five

Making the most of your outing







A successful outing will bring a smile to your loved one's face and plenty to talk about.

You can also relive the trip again and again during your time together by looking at photos you took, or shells you may have collected on the beach or a brochure, book or postcards you bought at a museum. On the next page are some more ideas of ways to get the most out of an outing.

"Relive memories of the trip when you can't get out and about."



1. **Make a memory branch.** Find a twig and tie bits and pieces that you've found to it to take home and remind you of your day in the great outdoors. You could also make a piece of artwork or nature collage. Seashells and sand are particularly good for this.
2. **Take plenty of photographs** and create a mini album to look over together.

3. **Photograph** trees, birds, butterflies and insects and make a nature display.



4. **Capture moments from the day on video camera** and watch it back on a rainy day.
5. **Make a memory box** of things you find and bring it out on a quiet afternoon.

6. **Relive memories of the trip** when you can't get out and about. Have a picnic indoors, enjoy a fish and chip supper or a proper afternoon tea.

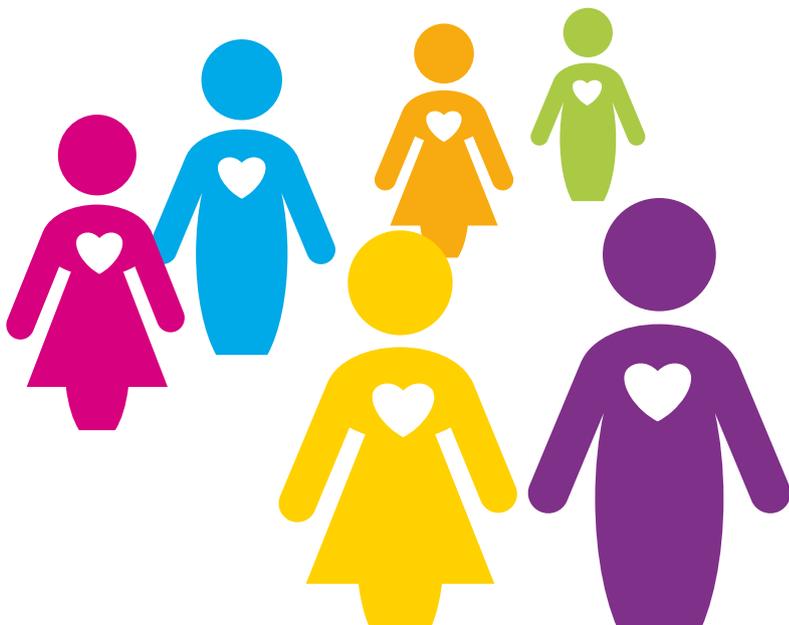


7. **Set up a digital photo frame** with memories of all the trips you have enjoyed together.
8. **Buy a souvenir book or guide** and enjoy reading it together.



Chapter six

It's good for carers to go too



Feelings of isolation, frustration and loneliness are common for people who care for loved ones living with dementia.

You might find it difficult to talk about your loved one's dementia, ashamed that you can feel overwhelmed, or you may not know where to go for help. Getting out and about can be one way of easing these

feelings. Meeting new people and sharing experiences with friends, can make all the difference to your own health and wellbeing.

1. A friend in need

Try to stay in touch with old friends. When your loved one is diagnosed with dementia you need your friends most. If they find it hard to talk to your loved one, tell – or, better still, show – them how they can help.

Many people will want to help you, but won't know how. Ask them if they'd sit with your loved one for an hour while you go to the shops. Suggest that a quick visit to see them would give you, and your companion, a helpful change of scene.

A trip out can be as simple as popping next door for a cup of tea, exploring



a friend's garden on a summer day or admiring their Christmas decorations on a dark night. Make the most of the network of friends and family you will have, and don't worry about calling on them for support when you need it.



2. A day to yourself

Many family carers find that using the services of a local day club can make all the difference to them and their loved one. Many care homes – including many of ours at Care UK – run day clubs where older people who are still living in the community can go as often as they like.

They get a change of scene, a chance to make new friends, enjoy tasty meals, and do new activities in the care of trained and experienced professional care teams and all while their carers enjoy some time to themselves.

3. Give yourself a break

"I had one week's respite, which turned into three weeks. It was a heart-warming experience. I feel totally refreshed and inspired. Just brilliant."



A respite resident at Mountfichet House

Being a full-time carer is very demanding, but respite care breaks are an opportunity for you to take a holiday, or simply spend some time looking after your own needs, safe in the knowledge that your loved one is receiving the very best care.

Many of our care homes offer respite care for people living with dementia. It gives them a chance to meet new people, have a change of scene and try new activities and experiences, all while their regular carer takes a well-earned break. Respite care can last for a few days or as long as you need.

"I first came to Wade House on respite care, while my family went on holiday. I enjoyed my time as a visitor and then came to live here. At first, it was a little strange but I soon felt comfortable and made friends. I never feel lonely as there is always someone about to help. I use the hairdresser and join in with the activities.

We do something different every day! Our washing is done for us, our meals are cooked and we can call for assistance at any time. If I could stay at home, I would, but this is the next best thing!"

A resident at Wade House

"If I could stay at home, I would, but this is the next best thing!"

4. Build a network

There are dementia support groups all over the UK and most people find it useful to join a local branch so they can meet with other carers and professionals. The Alzheimer's Society is a good place to start, but you can search online for other organisations and local meetings.

Meeting up with other people who are experiencing the same challenges and feelings can be a great help. These meetings are also a safe place for people living with dementia to meet too.

"We think it's good to go out to places and mix with other people who are living with dementia. It's also good to mix with other carers, so we can have a chat. We talk with the staff who run the dementia groups – they are so helpful and always there when you need them. It's nice to get out and see different faces."

Elizabeth Anne Cook, a family carer and friend of Care UK



And finally...

Every day at Care UK, we see the positive impact trips out and visits can have on people living with dementia. We hope that this guide, with its tips and quotes from family carers and members of our own care teams, has inspired you to get out and about, and to try something and somewhere new with your loved one.

There are lots of helpful organisations and contacts in the following pages, and we would love to hear from you at any time if you'd like to know more about day clubs, respite care and how we can help you to care for your loved one.

In the meantime, we think these are wise and fitting words to end this dementia-friendly days out guide.

“Stay calm, stay patient, stay loving. Keep a sense of humour and go at the pace of the person you're caring for. Above all, don't be afraid to abandon a trip if it isn't working.”

A family carer and friend of Care UK





Sources of advice and support



For more information about Care UK and our homes and services, visit our website [careuk.com/care-homes](https://www.careuk.com/care-homes).

Free guides

You will find a series of free guides to download, offering advice on caring for someone living with dementia, on respite care and advice on choosing a care home.

- 'As Easy as ABC' is a guide produced by Care UK. It gives 100 hints and tips for activity based care and is for family carers and visitors to our homes to help them and their loved one get the most out of each day.
- Our 'Listen, Talk, Connect' guide provides helpful advice and tips for carers on how to effectively listen to, and communicate with, people who are living with dementia.

To download your copies visit [careuk.com/care-homes/dementia-care/support-for-families-and-carers](https://www.careuk.com/care-homes/dementia-care/support-for-families-and-carers) or email RCSmarketing@careuk.com with your postal address for a free copy of one, or both, of these guides.

Local support

Many care homes will have links with local charities that support both people living with dementia and their carers – ask your nearest home for more information and contact details.

A number of our homes hold regular support sessions for family carers through their 'Friends of' groups, dementia cafés and drop-in sessions. All are welcome at these groups – please just ask your nearest home for more information.

For more information on funding your own care visit [careuk.com/care-homes/choosing-funding-care](https://www.careuk.com/care-homes/choosing-funding-care) or go directly to the Department of Health website for an explanation of personal health budgets at www.gov.uk

Other sources of advice and support

Health and social care professionals can offer information, advice and care to people with dementia and their carers. The services available and how they are organised vary by area, so to find out about what is available in your area contact your local social services department or GP surgery.

Here are some other organisations that may be able to help.

Age UK

Age UK has been helping older people across the UK for more than 60 years.
ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer Scotland

Specialist services for people with dementia and their carers.
alzscot.org

Alzheimer's Society

For information, advice and local services for those looking after someone with dementia.
alzheimers.org.uk

Care Information Scotland

For information about care services for older people living in Scotland.
careinfoscotland.co.uk

Care Inspectorate Scotland

The independent body for care services in Scotland.
scswis.com

Care Quality Commission

The CQC is the health and social care regulator for England.
cqc.org.uk

Carers UK

Offers advice on benefits and services available to carers.
carersuk.org

Carers Trust

Information and local support services for carers.
carers.org

Carers Direct

A comprehensive national information service for carers.
nhs.uk/carersdirect

Dementia Action Alliance

Supports communities and organisations to enable people to live well with dementia.
dementiaaction.org.uk

Dementia Adventure

Connecting people living with dementia with the outdoors.
dementiaadventure.co.uk

Dementia UK

Provides expert care and support to people living with and affected by dementia.
dementiauk.org

Holidays for All

An umbrella website for specialist tour companies and disability charities.
holidaysforall.org

Silver Line

Free confidential helpline providing advice to older people. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 0800 470 8090.
thesilverline.org.uk

Tourism for all

Provides information on accessible places in the UK and abroad for disabled people, their carers and family.
tourismforall.org.uk

Assisted technology

Whether you're at home, or on holiday, modern technology is helping people with dementia to live more independently.

AT Dementia

Provides information on products, from devices that can help to prompt or remind, to communication and safety products.
atdementia.org.uk

Contact4Me

Allows you to store up to ten phone numbers and any medical alerts in your own emergency database, and accessed immediately by emergency services.
contact4me.com

Medic Alert

ID bracelets, necklaces and watches that help to make sure that you receive treatment in an emergency.
medicalert.org.uk

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