

THERAPEUTIC ACTIVITIES FOR 3 MAIN STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Therapeutic activities are beneficial to individuals living with Alzheimer's at all stages of the disease. Therapeutic activities can increase cognitive function, provide joy and relaxation, and contribute to healthy aging. However, different therapeutic activities may be more beneficial than others depending on which stage of the disease an individual is experiencing.

****AFA offers virtual therapeutic activities 7 days a week at the AFA Teal Room, at 2:30 PM ET every day. Recordings are also available.*

Early Stage (Mild)

In the earliest stage of Alzheimer's disease, people may:

- Forget words
- Misplace objects
- Forget something they just read
- Ask the same question over and over
- Have increased trouble making plans or organizing
- Be unable to remember names when meeting new people

In the early stage of Alzheimer's, these therapeutic activities may be beneficial:



- **Cognitive activities:** Trivia, word finds, card games, board games
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- **Physical activities:** Fitness, walking, dancing, balloon toss, gardening, flower arranging
- **Social activities:** Discussion/conversation with loved ones, storytelling
- **Expressive activities:** Painting, collaging, creating/singing to music, journaling, writing letters to loved ones

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- **Reminiscence:** Scrapbooking, cooking/baking, holiday traditions

Middle Stage (Moderate)

In the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease, people may:

- Forget details about themselves
- Forget details about time, seasons, dates, and locations
- Have trouble cooking meals or ordering from a menu
- Get confused about what kind of clothes to wear
- Have a strong emotional need to have a purpose or care for something
- Have problems with sleep disorders
- Develop hygiene issues and incontinence
- Need help starting or continuing activities

In the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease, these therapeutic activities may be beneficial:



- **Cognitive activities:** Activities of daily living tasks, such as folding laundry, washing dishes, sorting socks
- **Physical activities:** Easy to follow fitness activities, dancing freely to familiar music, guided walks, balloon toss
- **Social activities:** Pet therapy groups, engaging in discussions with familiar topics
- **Expressive activities:** Simple creative arts instruction, watercolor painting, singalongs
- **Reminiscence:** Flipping through photo albums, watching an old movie, interacting with a therapeutic doll/stuffed animal, aromatherapy

Late Stage (Severe)

ALZHEIMER'S FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

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In the late stage of Alzheimer's disease, there is almost total memory loss. A person might:

- Recognize faces but forget names
- Mistake a person for someone else
- Experience delusions, such as thinking they need to go to work even though they no longer have a job
- Develop a strong need for holding something close for tactile stimulation, nurturing, companionship and comfort
- Lose basic abilities such as eating, walking, and sitting

- No longer be able to identify thirst and hunger
- Need help with all basic activities of daily living

In the late stage of Alzheimer's disease, these therapeutic activities may be beneficial:



- **Cognitive activities:** Activities that encourage hygiene like washing hands to familiar music, simple sensory stimulation activities
- **Physical activities:** Gentle and simple stretches/movement-based activities, scarf dancing
- **Social activities:** Pet therapy groups, human touch, and love
- **Expressive activities:** Active music listening, tactile free-style artmaking
- **Reminiscence:** Flipping through photo albums, watching an old movie, interacting with a therapeutic doll/stuffed animal, aromatherapy