

Dementia-Friendly Home Improvements

Small changes that can make everyday life safer, calmer and more manageable

When someone is living with dementia, the home environment can have a huge impact on their daily life. Many families only begin thinking about home adaptations after a fall, accident, or moment of crisis — but often, relatively small changes made early can help someone remain independent and comfortable for much longer.

Confidence

Familiar, well-organised spaces help people feel secure and capable in their own home.

Safety

Reducing hazards and improving visibility lowers the risk of falls and accidents.

Independence

Thoughtful adaptations allow people to do more for themselves, for longer.

Daily Routines

A calm, predictable environment supports consistent habits and reduces stress.

This guide outlines practical home improvements that can make everyday life easier for someone living with dementia — and more reassuring for the people supporting them.


Essential Safety Adaptations

Three of the most impactful areas to address early are lighting, trip hazards, and bathroom safety. Together, these changes may reduce risk and improve day-to-day confidence.

Lighting & Visibility

Good lighting can reduce confusion, improve confidence, and help prevent falls.

- Increase brightness in darker areas
- Install automatic night lights in hallways and bathrooms
- Improve stair lighting
- Reduce shadows and glare
- Use daylight bulbs where appropriate

 Poor lighting can make patterns, shadows, or reflections appear confusing or frightening for someone with dementia. This is one of the simplest and most affordable changes to make.

Reducing Trip Hazards

Falls are one of the biggest risks for older adults — especially when dementia affects balance, perception, or judgement.

- Remove loose rugs
- Secure trailing cables
- Reduce clutter in walkways
- Keep floors clear and consistent
- Improve stair safety with secure handrails

Bathroom Safety

Bathrooms are one of the most common places for slips and accidents. Helpful adaptations can make a significant difference to both safety and dignity.



Grab Rails

Install rails near toilets and showers to provide support when sitting, standing, or moving.



Walk-In Showers

Walk-in showers with a seat are often safer and easier to use than a traditional bath.



Anti-Slip Flooring

Anti-slip mats or flooring reduce the risk of falls on wet surfaces significantly.



Contrasting Colours

Using contrasting colours helps important features — like toilet seats and door handles — stand out more clearly.

Navigation, Technology & Wellbeing

Beyond physical safety, a dementia-friendly home should also support orientation, calm, and continued engagement with daily life — indoors and out.

Making the Home Easier to Navigate

Dementia can affect visual processing and orientation. Simple changes can help reduce confusion and create a calmer, more predictable environment.

- Clear labels on cupboards and drawers
- Pictures or symbols on important rooms
- Large clocks and calendars in visible spots
- Consistent placement of everyday items
- Reducing unnecessary furniture or obstacles

Kitchen Safety

Cooking can become more difficult or unsafe as dementia progresses. Helpful options include induction hobs with automatic shut-off, kettle tippers, easy-grip utensils, labelled cupboards, and simplified storage systems. Some families also choose to remove or restrict access to potentially dangerous appliances later on.

Outdoor Safety & Confidence

Access to outdoor space can improve wellbeing enormously. Helpful improvements may include secure garden gates, better pathway lighting, even paving surfaces, seating areas for rest, and removing trip hazards outdoors. Some families also use GPS-enabled devices if wandering becomes a concern.

Creating Calm Spaces

Dementia can sometimes increase sensitivity to noise, clutter, or overstimulation. Many families find it helpful to reduce background noise, simplify busy rooms, create quiet spaces for rest, avoid overly patterned carpets or wallpaper, and use familiar objects and photographs for reassurance.

- ✓ Small environmental changes can sometimes reduce anxiety significantly — and make home feel like a safe, familiar place again.

Technology That Can Help

Technology can support both independence and reassurance. These tools are not about removing independence — often, they help preserve it for longer.



Location & Movement

- GPS tracking devices
- Door sensors or alerts
- Motion-sensor lighting



Safety Alerts

- Fall detection devices
- Video doorbells
- Emergency call systems



Daily Reminders

- Medication reminder devices
- Simplified phones with photo contact buttons
- Digital clocks with date display

A final thought: You do not need to change everything at once. Often the best approach is simply: one practical improvement, one safer space, one small step at a time. And many families find that the earlier they make adjustments, the calmer and easier life becomes later on.