THE CAREGIVER'S CHEAT SHEET TO:

Made with our friends at CareScout®

Creating a Dementia-Friendly Home

(For when the house they know by heart starts getting confusing.)

Dementia changes how the brain reads the space around it. So even a room your person has known forever can suddenly feel confusing (or a little scary).

The good news: you don't need a renovation. A few small tweaks to the environment and the daily routine can make everyday life feel a scootch easier. For them *and* for you.

1. Simplify the Spaces

A busy room is a lot for the brain to sort through. When too much is going on, it can feel overwhelming or confusing.

→ Small changes can help. Try:

- [ ] Keeping surfaces and counters clear of clutter
- [ ] Keeping clear walking paths through rooms
- [ ] Removing busy patterns on rugs, towels, or curtains
- [ ] Avoiding furniture rearrangements whenever possible

2. Make Everyday Tasks More Obvious

As memory fades, people rely more on **visual cues to guide them**. The environment can quietly "show" them what to do next.

→ Helpful ideas:

- [ ] Leave toothbrush and toothpaste visible in the bathroom
- [ ] Lay out clothes for the day
- [ ] Keep frequently used items in the same place every time
- [ ] Label drawers or cabinets if needed

3. Use Contrast to Make Things Easier to See

Dementia can make it harder to tell shapes, depth, and colors apart. When things blend together, everyday objects can become surprisingly hard to spot.

→ Using contrast helps important things stand out:

- [ ] A dark placemat under a light plate
- [ ] A colored toilet seat instead of white
- [ ] Tape on the edge of stairs
- [ ] Towels, soap, or cups that stand out against the sink or countertop

4. Reduce Noise and Overstimulation

Too much background noise can make it difficult to concentrate or follow conversations.

→ Consider:

- [ ] Limiting multiple TVs or devices playing at once
- [ ] Turning off TVs that are just running in the background
- [ ] Creating a quieter space during meals or conversations
- [ ] Keeping music soft and calming

5. Improve the Lighting

Light and shadow can play tricks, too. A shadow on the floor might look like a hole. A dim hallway might suddenly feel unfamiliar.

→ Try things like:

- [ ] Keeping rooms well lit, especially in the evening
- [ ] Using nightlights in hallways and bathrooms
- [ ] Opening curtains during the day

6. Create Predictable Daily Routines

Routine is one of the most powerful tools in dementia care. When the day follows a familiar rhythm, the brain has fewer decisions to make...and that reduces stress for everyone.

→ Helpful routines might include:

- [ ] Waking up at the same time
- [ ] Regular meal times
- [ ] A daily walk or activity
- [ ] Consistent bedtime routines

Pro Tip: Some families also find it helpful to use visual schedules, like a whiteboard or printed daily plan.

7. Surround Them with the Familiar

The sights, sounds, and objects someone has loved for years can help them stay connected to who they are.

→ Consider:

- [ ] Displaying family photos (and labeling them with names)
- [ ] Maintaining familiar traditions or daily habits
- [ ] Playing favorite music from earlier in life
- [ ] Keeping meaningful objects nearby

Last Word

Dementia doesn't just affect memory. It changes how the brain interprets the world around it.

A home that makes sense to them is a home that's easier on everyone. Including you.