

# 10 Tips to help with Dressing

There are different reasons that someone with dementia might have trouble getting dressed. They may have physical difficulties like range of motion or balance, a loss of interest, lack of awareness of the need, or problems remembering how to dress for example.

They may also feel embarrassed to need the help or to dress in front of someone else.

Here are some tips to help them to be as independent as possible and make it a good experience.



1

**Give Choice:** Choosing what to wear is a small but important personal choice and can help a person feel independent and confident. It can also be overwhelming, so providing only a couple of options each day can help to reduce the stress.



2

**Lay it out:** Lay out the outfit in the order it will be put on, with all buttons or zippers undone and ready to put on.



3

**Give it time and patience:** Rushing a person can cause distress. Expect to take it slow. It is better for them to do what they can on their own, even if it takes longer. If they need cueing, just do one step at a time. Give positive feedback and encouragement.



4

**Accept the unusual:** Respect their choices even if they choose something unusual, as long as it is not harming them in any way. ex: wearing trousers to bed or unseasonal or mismatched clothes.



5

**Choose comfort and ease:** Zippers and velcro are easier than buttons. Elastic waist pants can be easier and more comfortable. Soft, stretchy clothes are comfortable, and keep in mind what they can do - e.g. if a tight neck is hard to get on, stick to looser fits.



6

**Organize for success:** What works for one person may not for another - so figure out what system works best: reducing available clothes to reduce confusion, labelling drawers with words or pictures to help them find things, organizing clothes as completed outfits



7

**Comfort and Privacy:** Make sure the space is warm, and well lit. Give as much privacy as possible, close blinds and doors. - Do they have pain that makes dressing difficult? Make sure they have that managed!



8

**Go with what they like:** If they like to wear the same thing again and again, consider having multiples of the same thing.



9

**Try layers:** Layers of thin clothing are easier to adapt during the day than thick layers which can't be removed. If they're feeling too warm, a layer can be removed. Too cold, and another can be added.



10

**Hand holding technique:** Try using hand holding technique to help with dressing. Watch the video **Using Hand-under-Hand™ to Assist with Getting Dressed - Shirts and Coats** at <https://youtu.be/Wn1OEfQt0ow>