

Hand Massage

From "A Different Visit: Activities for Caregivers and their Loved Ones with Memory Impairments"

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The sense of touch is retained even when others fade. An easy way to do this is through a hand massage. Sharing this experience with someone can bring relaxation and social connection to both the recipient and the masseuse.

HOW TO

1. Before doing this activity, take into consideration conditions such as arthritis or sensitive skin. Please consult your family physician on these matters.
2. Ideally, this experience is enhanced by creating a spa-like environment. Select a quiet place, dim the lights, and play a relaxing recording. You are ready to begin!
3. Next, choose a comfortable chair with a back support for your family member or client. A small pillow placed at the back of the chair may make it more comfortable to lean back and relax. A wheelchair can also be adapted for additional support and comfort.
4. The second step is to offer your family member or client a choice of two or three different lotions. If the person has a favorite fragrance, you might wish to include that as a choice.
5. Sit comfortably in front of your loved one or client and begin by gently placing one of their hands in your hands. Time and touch communicate so much to the person.
6. Apply a small amount of lotion. Slowly, and with a very gentle touch, begin to massage each finger and then the hand. The key words here are "slowly and gently." The goal of this activity is relaxation.



TIPS

- A key point is to set aside the time you need for this activity.
- There is no time limit. You might take 15 minutes or longer. But it's really up to you and the person receiving the massage.
- Encourage your loved one or client to take a few deep breaths and close their eyes when you start the massage.

- This activity may be either non-verbal or a time to reminisce. You and the person receiving the massage decide.
- You may want to enhance the mood by introducing aromas, such as lavender.
- Do not rush! You have set aside this time, so enjoy.



Set aside the time you need for this activity

ADAPTATIONS - More Challenging

- For the next spa treatment, you may wish to extend this activity to incorporate a neck and shoulder massage.
- Don't forget the feet! Some people, believe it or not, love to have foot massages!
- If your family member or client is able, you can also increase the complexity of this activity by having them massage your hands. How special that might be!

ADAPTATIONS - Less Challenging

- Holding hands during a visit may be just what your loved one or client needs. Touch is an important way to stay connected, especially for those that do not communicate verbally.
- Let your loved one or client smell the different scented lotions.

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