

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Alzheimer's Activities: Hundreds of Activities for Men and Women with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders

By: B. J. FitzRay

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

As a caregiver of a person living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia, there are times that you don't know what you can do with them. This book gives you hundreds of ideas that you and the person you are caring for can enjoy.

Why should you do activities? People living with Alzheimer's and other dementias can benefit greatly from participation in activities. Caregivers who plan, organize, encourage and share these activities enjoy many of the same benefits. Here are just some benefits the person you care for may experience from successful activities:

- *enjoy happier daily life
- *Increase feelings of self-worth
- *Enhance and maintain general health
- *Maintain memory
- *Enhance and Maintain communication skills
- *Preserve family history
- *Reduce muscle and joint pain
- *Reduce nervous tension
- *Decrease pacing and restlessness
- *Decrease repetitive behaviors
- *Decrease wandering
- *Increase nighttime sleep

The author's father came to live with her family and they began searching for activities he would enjoy, which would increase his feelings of usefulness and be appropriate for his skill level. Most people living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia are able to participate in some pleasurable activities in the early and middle stages. This book contains suggestions for people who have memory impairment but are physically adept, who have memory impairment and physical disabilities, reduced vision and hearing, stiff joints, tremors, muscle weakness and other difficulties. There are suggestions for simple, moderate and moderately complex activities that you can adjust to your loved one's ability. There are some examples and anecdotes of family experiences to help you decide what level to do.

This book is formatted to those caring for family members at home, but can also be used by professionals working in medical facilities, day care programs and assisted-living residences.

The activities are broken down by an alphabetical listing of professions, sports, holidays, events, times in history, etc. For example, for Halloween, some of the suggestions are 1) bake and decorate Halloween cookies, 2) buy or gather mini-pumpkins, gourds and fall leaves for table decorations, 3) prepare bags of treats for trick-or-treaters, and 4) visit an elementary school to watch the children's costume parade. Depending on your loved one and their abilities, these are some enjoyable activities both of you can do.

Check this book out and see if it doesn't make a big difference in your loved one's enjoyment of life and your life, as a caregiver or family member.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township

Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.

