

Tips to making your home safer for people with Alzheimer's

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Bright lights, loud sounds and trip hazards can make a person with

Alzheimer's uncomfortable in the home and even pose real dangers.

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) says a few easy fixes can change all that.

"Every family caregiver's number one priority is making sure their loved one is safe, but most homes are not designed with the needs of someone living with dementia in mind," noted Jennifer Reeder, AFA's director of educational & social services.

"From [smart technology](#) to simply removing clutter, there are steps caregivers can take to make a home safer and more dementia-friendly, improving their loved one's quality of life as well as their own," she said in a foundation news release.

Try these 3 tips for caregivers to make the [home environment](#) a safer place:

Make technology your friend.

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors can save lives. But in some models, high-pitched alarms or beeps that can unsettle a person with Alzheimer's can often be electronically replaced by a more soothing human voice, alerting residents to an issue and its location.
- App-controlled thermostats can help caregivers track and adjust home temperatures so their loved one isn't too hot or cold.
- Video doorbells: So many households are installing these now to better monitor who's approaching or leaving the home in real time. People can also talk through these devices to someone on the other side of a door.
- Automatic fire extinguishers. Did you know you can install a device under your range hood that immediately dispenses baking

soda in the case of a range fire? It could prove to be a lifesaver.

Make tiny tweaks to reduce the risk of falls.

- Trips and falls can have devastating consequence for older people, including those with Alzheimer's disease. Small adjustments—covering sharp edges of furniture and countertops with rubber corner protectors, installing floor-level night lights to help folks navigate hallways and bathrooms, and grab bars in shower and near toilets—can all help keep people safe.
- Cut down on clutter, too, to reduce the odds of a fall, and avoid throw rugs that can easily trip up people or cause them to slip. Anti-slip rubber-backed mats are the rug of choice in bathrooms, and for people with mobility issues only use these rugs during bath time

Remember, color and lighting are key.

- Dementia can impair a person's eyesight, making judgments of distance and space tougher. Consider contrasting colors in your home decor to help the person's vision, [depth perception](#) and spatial orientation.
- As for lighting, the less glare the better, the AFA said, since harsh light can impair a person's vision even further.

More information: The National Institute on Aging has more on [Alzheimer's](#).

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