

HOW TO WASH AWAY THE STRESS: BATHING WITH DEMENTIA

Communication Tips

- Begin with a positive statement: "It is always nice to start the day feeling clean and fresh!"
- Link with an enjoyable activity: "First, let's get cleaned up and then we can have breakfast!"
- Verbalize each step, one at a time: "First let's put some soap on the washcloth."

Routine! Routine! Routine!

- Consider the person's preferences (morning or night time bathing).
- Get in the habit of doing it same time every day.
- Repetition leads to retention: repeating a routine task when possible is key for success.



Steps For Sponge Bathing

1. Prepare a bowl of warm, soapy water and a pile of towels.
2. Demonstrate and describe how the person will wash body.
3. Then, observe what they are able to do on their own (Can they wash their upper body?).
4. Start with area of body most comfortable to the person, slowly working towards all areas.
5. Do not remove all clothing items at once - only remove clothing in the areas you are working on.
6. Have them put on new clothing items as they go or place warm towels around them so that they do not get cold.



Pleasant Bathing Experience

- Provide the person with a warm towel immediately after the bath.
- Use scented body wash (as long as the person enjoys it and their skin can withstand it).
- Use colorful, easy to see objects such as sponges, bottles, or razors.
- Consider the texture of towels, shower seat, and loofah sponge.
- Have a diffuser with essential oils.
- Play music that they enjoy.
- Let them touch the water with their fingers first.
- Label all items in clear, easy to read font.
- Place non-slip coating on bottom of items.



Bathing Safely

- Provide adequate lighting in shower but minimize glare from natural light such as windows.
- Remove clutter - only make visible the item they need in order to bathe.
- Provide velcro or pullover clothing items.
- Provide a shower chair and have them sit while bathing.
- Ensure all rugs have non-slip coating on the bottom.
- Check water temperature before it touches the person's skin.

