

Bathing Routine Checklist

Creating Calm, Safe Experiences for Dementia Care

Remember: Every person is unique. Adapt this routine to individual preferences and needs. The goal is comfort, dignity, and safety for both you and your loved one.

1 Before Washing Up

- Warm the bathroom and towels (use towel warmer or dryer)
- Gather all supplies: soap, shampoo, washcloths, towels (or alternatively keep them out of the bathroom so you can keep going in and checking on them while "bringing them items you forgot")
- Check water temperature (lukewarm, not hot)
- Remove tripping hazards and ensure good lighting
- Start soft, calming music or nature sounds
- Approach calmly and explain what you're going to do
- Offer choice: "Do you want to wash up now or after breakfast?"
- Ensure privacy (close doors, use towels for modesty)

Bathing Routine Checklist

During Washing Up

2 During Washing Up

- Stay calm and speak in a soothing, encouraging tone
- Let them help as much as possible - guide, don't take over (such as give them a washcloth and say "you get the front, I will get the back")
- Start with feet and work up (less threatening approach)
- Use gentle, slow movements - avoid rushing
- Keep conversation light and positive
- Cover areas not being washed with a towel (it's okay if towels get wet)
- Watch for signs of distress - be ready to stop if needed
- Offer praise: "You're doing great!" or "This feels nice, doesn't it?"

Bathing Routine Checklist

After Washing Up, Tips & Notes

3 After Washing Up

- Wrap immediately in warm, soft towels (use towel warmer for clothing and towels)
- Pat dry gently - don't rub vigorously
- Apply moisturizer to prevent dry skin
- Help dress in comfortable, familiar clothes
- Offer a special treat: favorite snack, drink, or activity
- Give lots of praise: "Thank you so much for your help!" "You look like a million bucks!"
- Continue pleasant activity (looking at photos, listening to music)
- Document any concerns or changes for healthcare team

Quick Tip

If they resist, try again later. Sometimes a different time of day works better. Consider "dry shampoo" days or sponge baths as alternatives when needed. Use words like "spa day" or "freshen up" instead of clinical terms.

Personal Notes & Preferences

BEST TIME OF DAY:

FAVORITE MUSIC/SOUNDS:

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE:

SPECIAL COMFORT ITEMS:

AFTER-BATH TREAT:

WHAT HELPS THEM FEEL CALM:
