Living Well, Aging Safely

Dementia-Friendly Home Modifications



Victoria Loudermilk, OTR/L, OTD
Frederica Kennedy, OTR/L, OTD
Nancy Fowler, OTR/L , OTD
Brenau University Occupational Therapy

2025 DOUBLING DOWN on Dementia
DEMENTIA SYMPOSI

Is it possible?

Yes

with tips from an occupational therapist!

Occupational therapists:

- offer unique training and experience
- assess both person and home
- provide adaptive techniques and strategies

Home Environmental Modification

A "vast array of strategies"

- Structural renovation
- Assistive devices and equipment
- Placement of visual cues and memory aids
- Environmental safety
- Simplification of environment and tasks

Structural Renovation



- Improved access for the person with dementia
- Convenient access for caregiver
- Increased safety

Higher Cost Options

- Adding first floor bathroom/bedroom, or a full granny pod/ADU
- Adding stair glide or elevator
- Simplifying layouts (open concept)
- Widening doorways
- Installing ramps









Lower Cost Options

- Modify a current room
- Offset hinges to widen doorway
- Brighter lighting - ↑ bulb wattage
- Lock and safety gates
- Install lower thresholds, safer flooring









Assistive Devices and Equipment

- Bath chairs, grab bars, raised toilet seat
- Non-slip mat, hand-held shower head
- Bed rails, falls alarm
- Nanny camera, tracking devices
- Personal safety call device
- Medication reminders



Placement of Visual Cues and Memory Aids

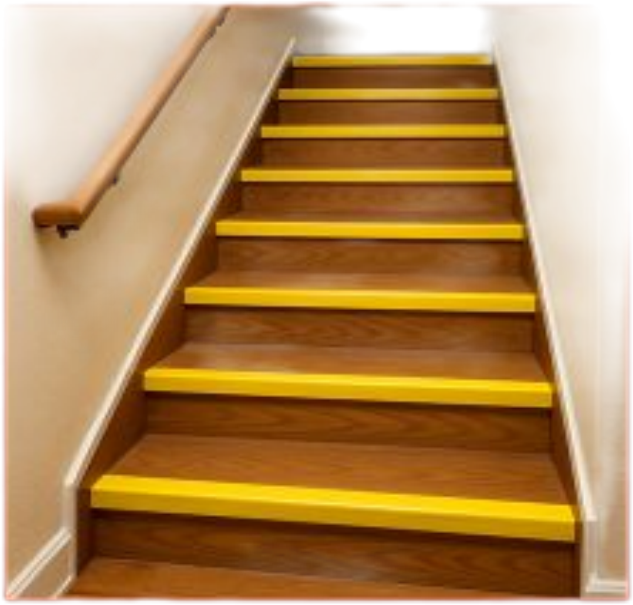
- Contrasting environment
  - Tape or paint for steps
  - Contrasting placemats
  - Contrasting toilet seat color
- Bright labels
- Wayfinding aids - clear paths throughout home
- Easily identifiable path to bathroom

Contrast

- Tape or paint for steps
- Contrasting toilet seat color
- Contrasting placements








Underwear
Nightwear &
vests


Socks



Environmental Safety Considerations

- Remove, lock, or turn off unsafe items
- Alarms, adaptive tools
- Rearrangement of furniture for safe paths
- Emergency planning
- Visual cues



Simplification of Home & Tasks

- Simplify as much as possible
- Minimize distractions - set up the task
- Decrease audio levels and visual “noise”
- Use language that’s simple and meaningful






LIFE
LIFE

References

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (n.d.). Dementia care guidelines. Retrieved from https://www.cms.gov/medicare/dementia-care-guidelines
- Christiansen, C. H. & Matuska, K. M. (eds.). (2020). Ways of living: Intervention strategies to enable participation (4th ed.) AOTA Press. ISBN: 978-1459002988.
- Gitlin, L. (1998). Testing home modification interventions: Issues of theory, measurement, design, and implementation. *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics, 18, 190-246.*

Questions?

What are your questions?

How to reach the presenters:

vloudermilk@brenau.edu

fkennedy1@brenau.edu

nfowler1@brenau.edu

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Your donation helps us build dementia preparedness in our communities with impactful programs like this symposium.

PLEASE FOLLOW QR CODES TO DONATE

AND, PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR SURVEY !

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

GEORGIA CHAPTER

Beyond Dementia Coalition

2025 DOUBLING DOWN on Dementia DEMENTIA SYMPOSI