



ACTIVITY BOOK

For caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia

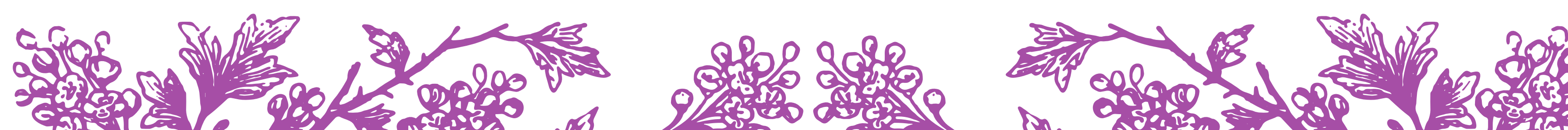


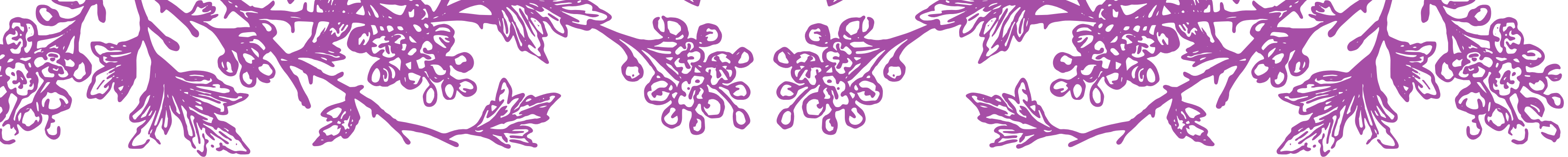
Created by Occupational Therapy Students



McGill

School of
Physical and
Occupational Therapy



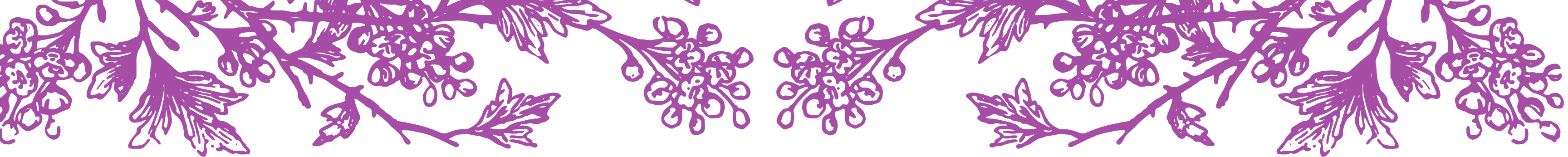


Our team became introduced to the topic of dementia through our Occupational Therapy (OT) coursework. The goal was to create a project that would be relevant and useful during the COVID-19 pandemic. After discussions with the Steinberg Centre for Simulation and Interactive Learning, we learned that their dementia workshops were temporarily shut down and they were looking to develop resources for caregivers of individuals with dementia. We looked into what resources were available online and found that there was a focus on safety and daily care, such as bathing and eating, but very little information about leisure. As OTs, leisure is a very important category. We enable clients to do meaningful activities, which includes hobbies and other fun pastimes with family and friends. This led us to the idea of an activity book that will hopefully provide inspiration for individuals with dementia and their loved ones as well as outline how to adjust each activity to make it successful.

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With the assistance of K. Falcicchio.

If you have questions, comments or suggestions,
please contact us by email at dementia@mcgill.ca.



Introduction

WHY ACTIVITIES ARE IMPORTANT:

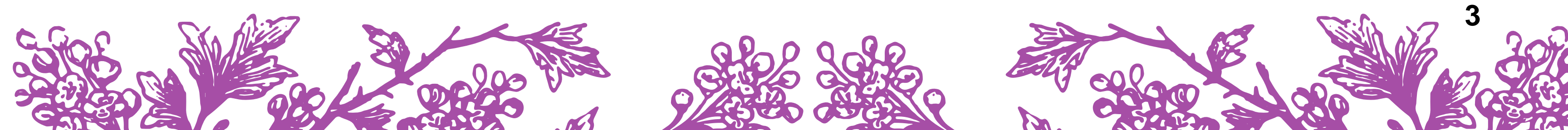
Engaging in meaningful activities is important for individuals of all ages. For individuals with dementia, it is important for them to continue engaging in the activities that they enjoy by making suitable adaptations. Aligning activities with a person's interests and abilities will contribute to their sense of self, promote creativity and add to their quality of life.

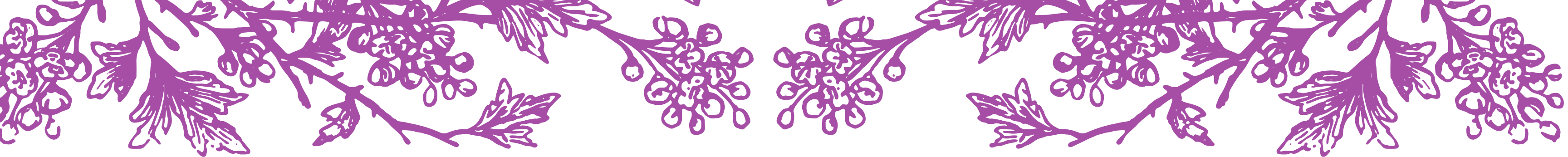
USING THIS BOOK:

In the following book, we have proposed 40+ activities that you and your loved one can engage in and enjoy together. For each activity, the target and steps, materials required and ways to adapt it to the individual's abilities are described. As a caregiver, you should do these activities with your loved one as it will be important to support them, ensuring they are safe.

Consider the time of day that you chose to engage in each activity as you want to select a time when your loved one is most alert. These activities all vary in length, and can be done in steps over multiple days. If needed, ensure your loved one is wearing their glasses and hearing aids before you start. Take note that even just having your loved one present can promote well-being. We hope these activities bring you joy!

NOTE: In this book, the term "loved one" refers to the individual living with dementia, acknowledging that this person may be a family member, friend or a client that is being cared for by you.



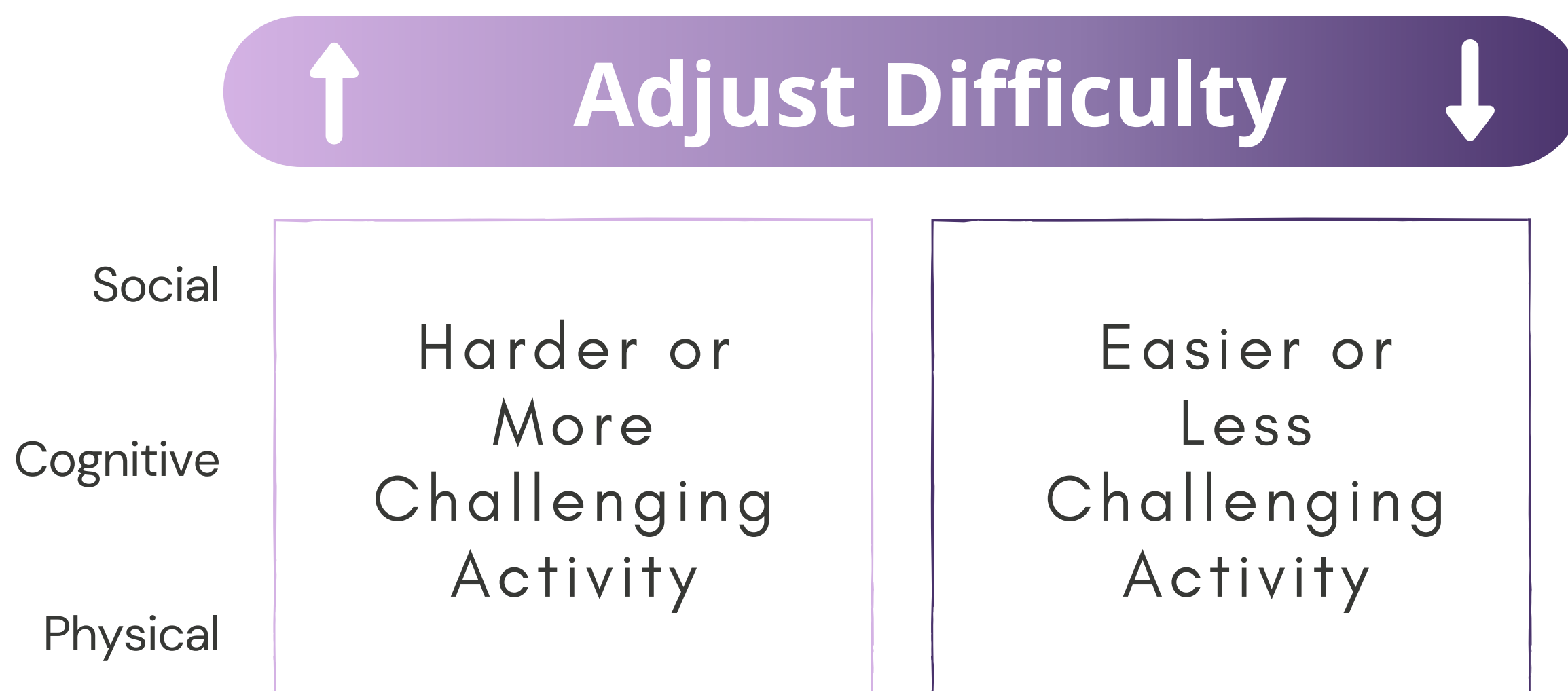


Introduction

HOW TO ADJUST THE ACTIVITY:

Since every individual is different, it is important to tailor the activity to your loved one's current abilities. A chart, included below, provides suggestions for how you can increase (left-hand box) or decrease (right-hand box) the challenge. For many activities, you can adjust different components of the activity:

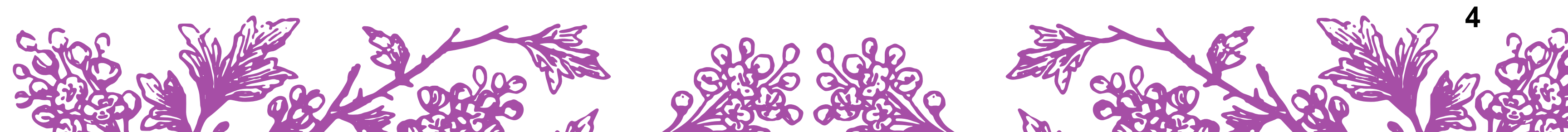
social, physical, cognitive. You may want to adjust one component, or adjust them all. The activity should be stimulating and challenging, while still allowing your loved one to experience success. Before beginning the activity, think about what your loved one can participate in and do your best to only assist as much as needed. Throughout the stages of dementia, ensure to promote your loved one's decision making and independence.

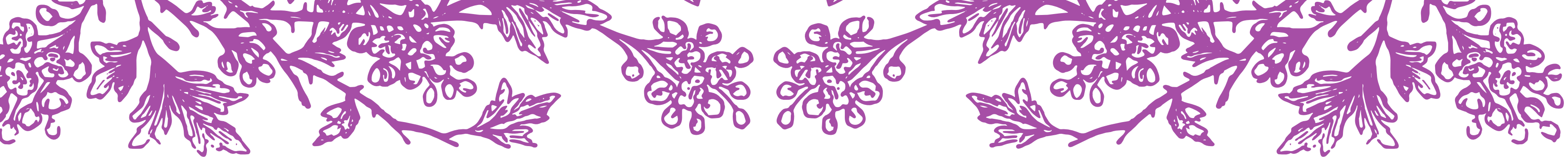


Social: changing the extent of interactions with others by including fewer or more people in the activity

Physical: changing how much effort is needed, aspects of the environment or how the body is used to complete the activity

Cognitive: changing the complexity of the activity and the mental effort needed to complete it



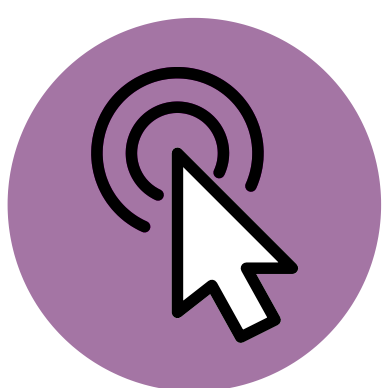


Introduction

There are several **icons** throughout this activity book; below is a description of what each illustrates



Safety: some safety and precaution tips will be provided



Click the Link: the underlined words or links can be clicked, and will bring you to additional external sources



Idea: some tips to make your activity more fun, exciting and stimulating for both you and your loved one

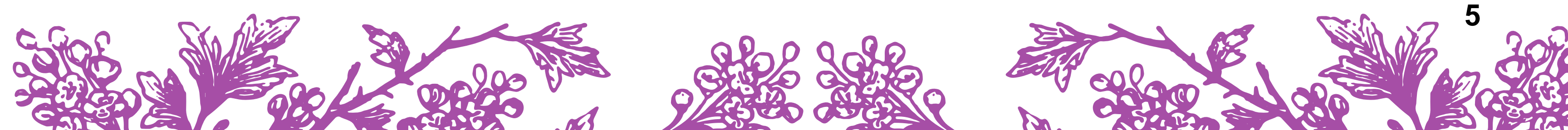


Virtual: this activity can be done online through a computer/iPad or any other electronic device that has internet connection



Holiday: these activities are specific to the holiday season

NOTE: You can find blank pages at the end of the book to fill in your own activities.



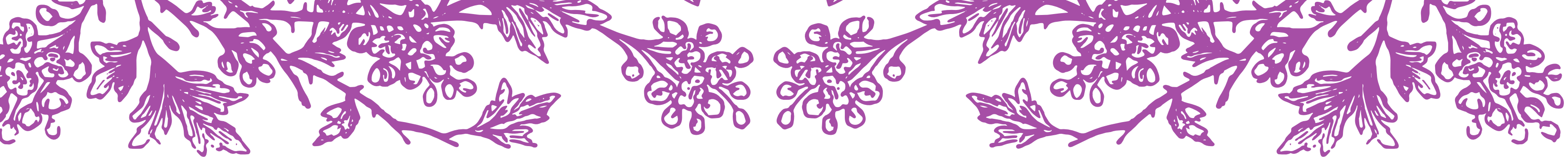










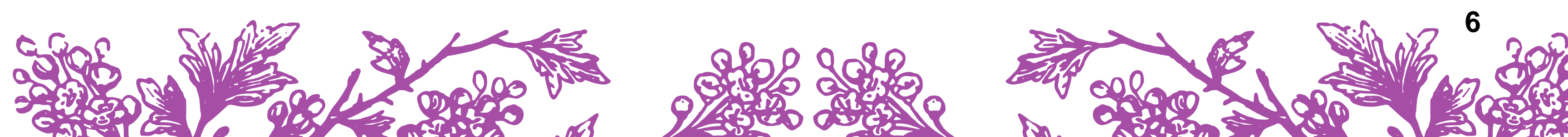


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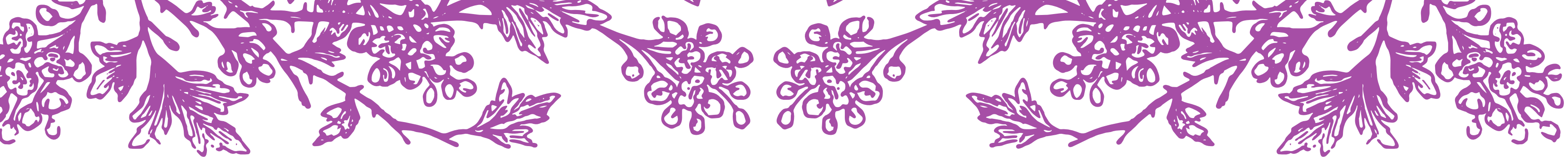


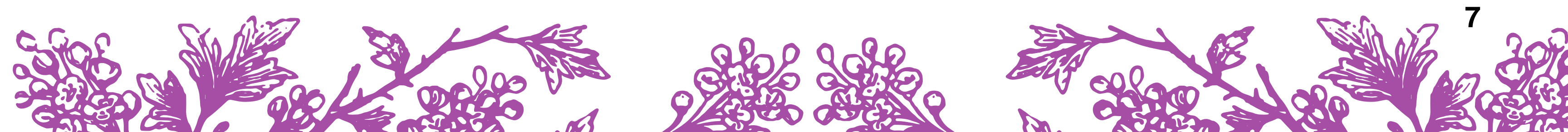
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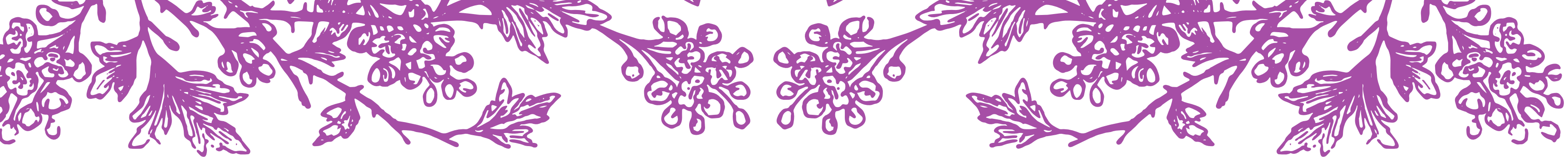


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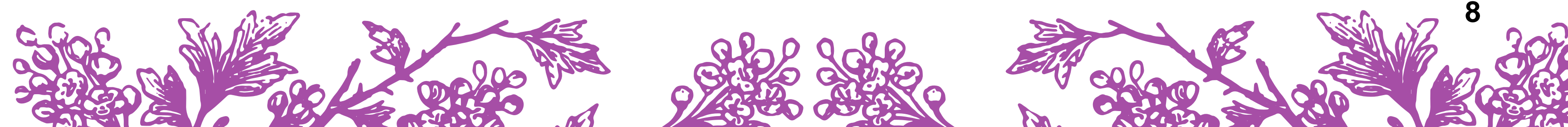
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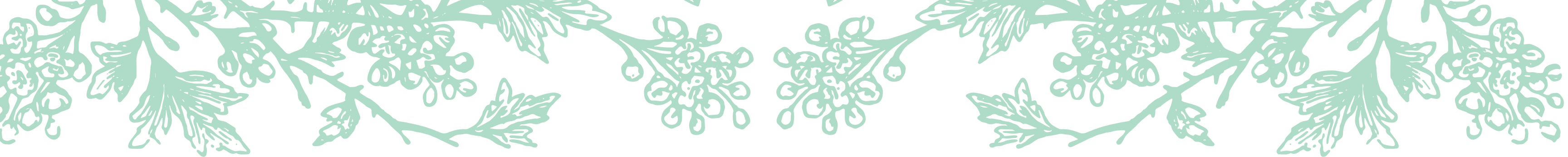
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CREATING & CRAFTING

Creating and crafting encompasses many activities individuals engage in throughout their lifetime. For you and your loved one, these can lead to feelings of relaxation, improved mood, and sparked creativity. Moreover, creating something can be very empowering, as it provides a greater sense of control and can improve self-esteem. Participating together promotes social engagement and strengthens the bond between you and your loved one. Focus on utilizing your loved one's strengths, while choosing activities that they love to do, and incorporating materials or objects that they have worked with before (1). This allows both you and your loved one to reminisce and improve well-being!



1

COOKING TIME

Materials Needed

The materials for cooking will heavily depend on what is being made.

- Recipe of choice and corresponding ingredients
- Culinary tools
- Kitchen area

Why do it?

Cooking can be an excellent way to stimulate all senses and promote social engagement while providing an individual with a sense of contribution. It can also help alleviate aggressive or agitated behaviours. Since some individuals with dementia lack appetite, this could provide them with the opportunity to make their own, more appealing food!



Adjust Difficulty



Social

- Provide supervision by helping out or just by being around.

Cognitive

- Have your loved one carry out each step of the recipe independently.
- Prepare a full meal.

Physical

- Prepare a meal from scratch.

- Have your loved one watch you cook.

- Read the recipe instructions out loud to your loved one.
- Prepare a snack.

- Prepare food with pre-made mixes.
- Pre-cut and measure ingredients.
- Provide suitable physical, verbal and visual guidance.
- Mix and chop ingredients from a seated position.

Safety



Person

- Always use supervision to avoid burns on appliances such as stoves or ovens.
- Cut food into small pieces and use softer foods when needed to facilitate swallowing and avoid choking.

Equipment

- Use oven mitts on hot plates and surfaces.
- Use labelled foods and always check expiration dates.
- Use a timer or an auto shut-off oven or stove to avoid burning the food and creating a fire hazard.

Environment

- Make sure your kitchen or cooking area is clutter-free and well-lit.
- Have a table and chairs where you can sit to cook rather than stand, to reduce fatigue.

Be prepared in order to minimize accidents!

Recipe Ideas

Notes

- If your loved one is making the majority of the recipe, ensure all ingredients are used and no steps are missed!
- In the next few pages, examples of possible recipes to make have been provided. Remember, if your loved one is in the late stage of dementia, simply watching you prepare a meal in person, or in video, can promote their engagement and sense of participation.

Additional Resources



- For additional recipes, "[Cooking for People with Dementia](#)" provides lots of ideas!
- Find ways to promote your loved one's eating habits and nutrition, check out [Alzheimer's Association Food and Eating](#).
- Keep your home safe with the [Home Safety Checklist!](#)



Picnic Sandwich

Steps

1. Gather preferred ingredients for a sandwich (bread, butter, tomatoes, lettuce, ham, cheese, etc.)
2. Place ingredients on bread, one-by-one.
3. Enjoy this sandwich together in the kitchen, or bring it outdoors for a picnic!



- Ingredients can be pre-cut depending on your loved one's ability.
- Pita bread may be used, cutting the pita in half and filling the inside with ingredients, to keep the food well compacted and make it less messy to eat.

Full Recipe at: <https://dementia.livebetterwith.com/blogs/advice/14-cooking-and-kitchen-activity-ideas-for-care-home-residents>

Recipe Ideas

Fruit Kebabs

Steps

1. Gather preferred fruits (bananas, strawberries, mango, etc.) and skewers.
2. Cut and thread each fruit through the skewer; fruits can also be peeled if desired.
3. As an optional step, melt some chocolate to dip the kebabs into or drizzle on top.
4. Enjoy!



- Make sure to cut the fruit into small enough pieces to help with swallowing, and try using softer fruits if possible. Use a plastic skewer to avoid potential injury.

- This simple recipe gives your loved ones the option to choose their preferred fruits and improves fine motor skills!



Full Recipe at: <https://dementia.livebetterwith.com/blogs/advice/14-cooking-and-kitchen-activity-ideas-for-care-home-residents>

Bake and Decorate Cookies

Steps

1. Gather ingredients required to make the cookie dough
2. Roll out cookie dough.
3. Using cookie cutters, cut out cookies of different shapes and bake them according to the recipes instructions.
4. Using pre-made frosting, sprinkles and any other decoration you want, decorate the cookies with your loved one.



- Use an easy sugar cookie recipe to make your cookies from scratch, or make them from a mix!

- Use the oven safely, and wear oven mitts when taking the cookies out. Ensure cookies are completely cooled prior to consumption.



Full Recipe at: <https://www.active-minds.org/news/5-baking-activities-suitable-for-those-with-dementia/>



Recipe Ideas

Multi-Purpose Dough

Steps (makes 4 loaves of bread or 4 pizzas)

1. Measure 5.5 cups flour, 1.5 tsp yeast, 2.25 tbsp salt and 2.5 cups water.
2. Use your fingers to mix the yeast, salt and flour in a bowl.
3. Pour the water in while stirring with your fingers. Once water is mixed, start kneading the dough (add flour if dough is too sticky, or add water if dough is too dry).
4. Place in a deep, lightly greased bowl, cover and let it rise until it has doubled in size.
5. Follow cooking directions for bread or pizza recipe.



- Depending on your loved one's ability, have them engage in more steps of the recipe.
- Kneading the dough can be relaxing, so just doing this step can be enough stimulation.



Full Recipe at: <https://www.injennieskitchen.com/2017/09/all-purpose-dough-for-bread-pizza-more/>

Pizza

Steps

1. Using the dough from the above recipe, roll it out with a rolling pin or stretch it out using your hands to form a circle about 1/2 inch thick.
2. Choose sauce, cheese and toppings (cut any ingredients that need to be cut).
3. Place ingredients on pizza.
4. Bake for 12-15 minutes until dough is cooked and cheese is melted in a 400°F oven.
5. Let cool a bit and enjoy!



- Always wear oven mitts when moving the pizza in and out of the oven. Ensure the pizza has cooled slightly prior to eating.
- Buy pre-packaged or frozen pizza dough to make this recipe a little faster!



Recipe Ideas

Smoothie Time!

Steps

1. Gather preferred liquid (milk, juice, yogurt), fruits and/or vegetables (spinach, berries, bananas, etc.) and any other ingredients your loved one wants added (dates, cocoa powder, etc.).
2. Cut the fruits and vegetables into small chunks.
3. Put everything in the blender and blend until fully mixed.
4. Pour smoothie into a separate glass and enjoy!
 - Depending on your loved one's abilities, you may want to operate the blender and pre-cut the fruits and vegetables.
 - This food is in liquid form, making it easier to swallow.
 - Do not let your loved one drink with a straw, as this could lead to choking!



Full Recipe at: <https://dementia.livebetterwith.com/blogs/advice/14-cooking-and-kitchen-activity-ideas-for-care-home-residents>

Strawberry Freezer Jam

Steps

1. Gather necessary ingredients (3 1/3 cups crushed strawberries, 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 1 package dry pectin & 1 1/2 cups sugar).
2. Crush the strawberries and add the lemon juice and pectin in a microwavable bowl; let it sit for 20 minutes.
3. Add sugar; stir until dissolved. Heat in the microwave for 10 minutes. Remove and stir.
4. Skim the foam off the top, then pour into containers of your choice. Let them sit at room temperature for 1 hour.
5. After the jam has set, put containers in the freezer and consume whenever you want!

- Beware of hot surfaces!
- Made too much? Give these as a gift!



Full Recipe at: <https://www.dessertnowdinnerlater.com/low-sugar-strawberry-freezer-jam-tips-tricks-to-setting-jam/>



Recipe Ideas

Morning Pancakes

Steps

1. Gather ingredients indicated on the pancake mix box.
 2. Stir all ingredients together to form a batter, leaving a few lumps.
 3. Heat frying pan and pour about 1/4 cup of batter. Flip once little bubbles form on the top.
- Add chocolate chips or blueberries to your batter for some extra flavor!
 - Want an extra challenge? Make your pancake batter from scratch.



- Always use supervision and caution when operating the stove top as there is a risk of burns.



Full Recipe at: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=YrYrTo-OvOC&pg=PA74&ots=MozAQInOEK&dq=dumpling%20making%20for%20dementia&pg=PA4#v=onepage&q=dumpling%20making%20for%20dementia&f=false>



Mashed Potatoes

Steps

1. Gather potatoes, whole milk, butter, salt and any spices that you want to add in.
2. Cut potatoes and place in pot with salted water to boil for 20 minutes or until soft.
3. Drain the potatoes.
4. Mash the boiled potatoes with milk, butter, salt and any other spices you want to add in.
5. Let sit for a few minutes to cool and enjoy!



- Mashing all the foods together is a great repetitive activity for your loved one. It is also low-impact, as little force is required to mash the potatoes together once softened.

Full Recipe at: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=YrYrTo-OvOC&pg=PA74&ots=MozAQInOEK&dq=dumpling%20making%20for%20dementia&pg=PA4#v=onepage&q=dumpling%20making%20for%20dementia&f=false>

2

ORIGAMI MAKING



Materials Needed

- Coloured origami paper
- Scissors
- Instruction (written or video)

Why do it?

Origami is a Japanese paper folding art that works on fine motor skills. It can stimulate cognition as it requires the individual to attend to each step and to pay attention on how to correctly make each fold. If all steps are followed correctly, the end product can be a beautiful addition to your loved one's home decor.

Steps

1. Choose a preferred origami pattern.
2. Gather necessary materials.
3. Follow each step of cutting and folding using visual and/or verbal instruction.



Adjust Difficulty

Social

- Let your loved one engage in as many steps as possible.

Cognitive

- Choose a more complex pattern that matches their ability.

Physical

- Provide physical, verbal, and visual guidance as needed.
- Watch the instructions through video and sit together while you make it.
- Choose an origami with fewer steps.

Safety

Use safety scissors, or pre-cut pieces of paper!



2

ORIGAMI MAKING



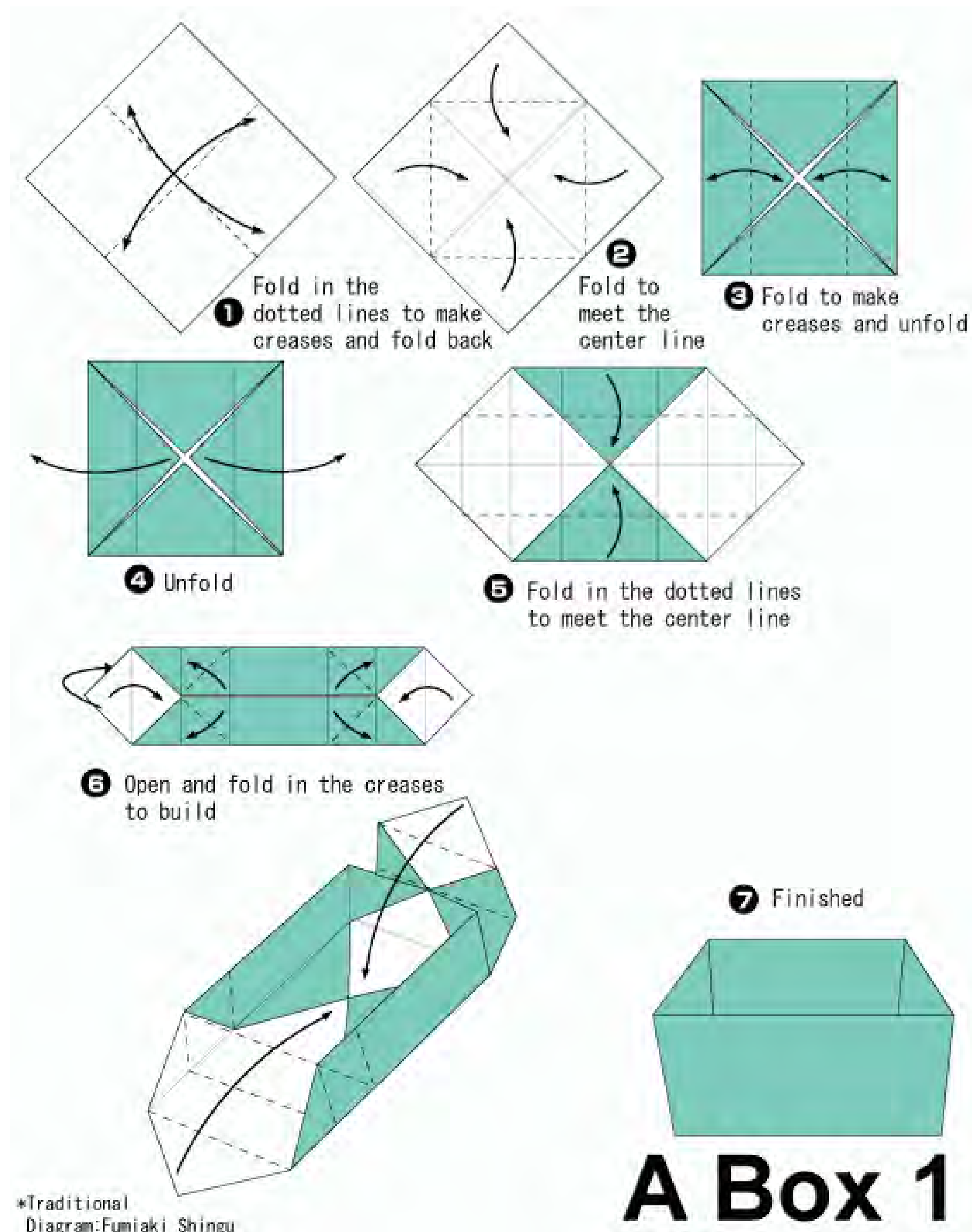
Make an Origami Box

- Read these instructions to make your own origami box, which can be used to store memorable items or anything you or your loved one wants!
- For more visual instruction, [watch this instructional video](#)

Resources



[This Origami Handbook](#) provides a guide of different origami figures of varying difficulties that can be made by you and your loved one.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/433190057897669491/>

3 MAKE PLAY DOUGH

Why do it?

Making your own play dough can lead to great sensory stimulation of touch, smell and sight! Working with any type of dough also has a great relaxing effect.



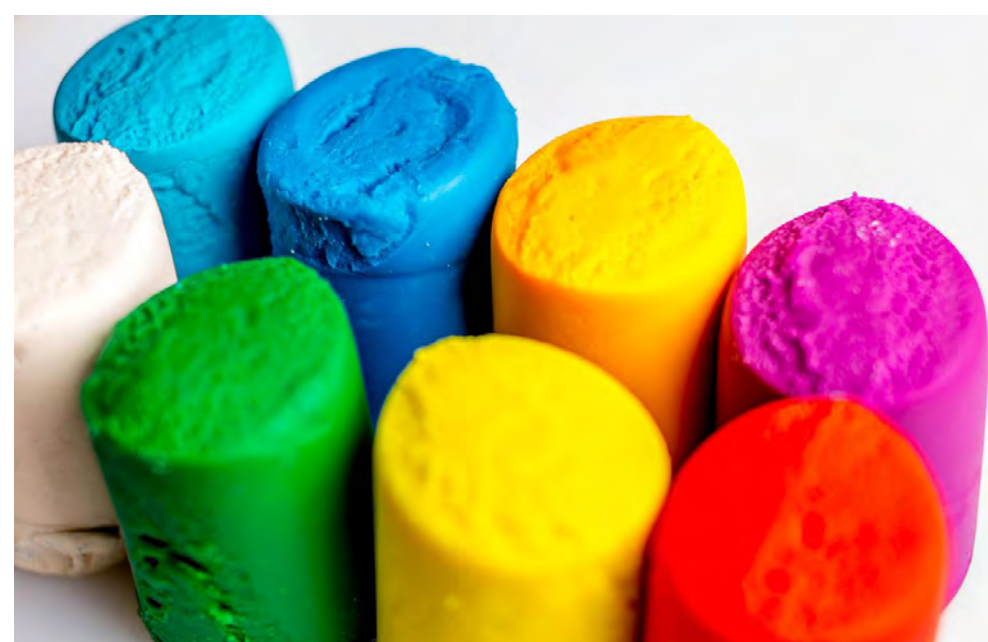
Materials Needed

- Bowl
- Tablespoon
- 1 tablespoon hair conditioner
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon water
- 6-10 drops essential oils (optional)
- Food colouring (optional)

Steps

Recipe taken from Play Doh Kitchen :

1. Mix conditioner and food colouring in a bowl.
2. Once well-mixed, add cornstarch and mix with a spoon until fully combined.
3. Add water and mix again.
4. Put some cornstarch on a cutting board, and place mixture onto it, incorporating the cornstarch until playdough consistency is reached.
5. If using essential oils, knead them in to the dough. Repeat with food colouring.
6. Sculpt your homemade dough into any shape you want!



Additional Resources

Watch this [video](#) for a more detailed visual guide to [making your homemade playdough!](#)



Adjust Difficulty

Let your loved one do most of the creating!

Make the play dough ahead of time or buy play dough from your local dollar store or [Walmart](#).

Safety

Even homemade dough can still be toxic; supervise your loved one while making and playing with the dough to avoid ingestion.



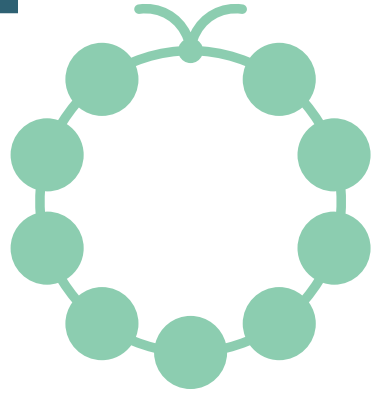
Notes

The essential oils are optional but provide a great and simple way to stimulate your loved one's sense of smell. Put in essential oil scents that bring back memories to make this more of a reminiscing activity!



4

MAKE JEWELRY



Why do it?

Stringing beads requires large amounts of fine manipulation and therefore allows you to work on maintaining your loved one's finger dexterity. The finished jewelry can be kept or given as gifts to others.

Steps

1. Pick out preferred beads and coloured string.
2. String beads in a desired pattern to make a necklace, ring or bracelet.
3. Tie a knot at the end of the string when the desired length and number of beads has been achieved.

Materials Needed

- Beads (Pony beads or others)
- Different coloured string, elastic or threads
- Anything else you want to add to your bracelet (seashells, buttons...)

↑ Adjust Difficulty ↓

- Use various sizes and shapes of beads to stimulate fine motor abilities or try a friendship bracelet!

- Use pony beads, which have larger holes, making it easier to pull the string through the bead.
- If unable to make jewelry, have your loved one show you which beads they want and make a piece of jewelry for them!



Safety



Always supervise your loved one to avoid accident or injury as small beads are a choking hazard if ingested.

4

MAKE JEWELRY

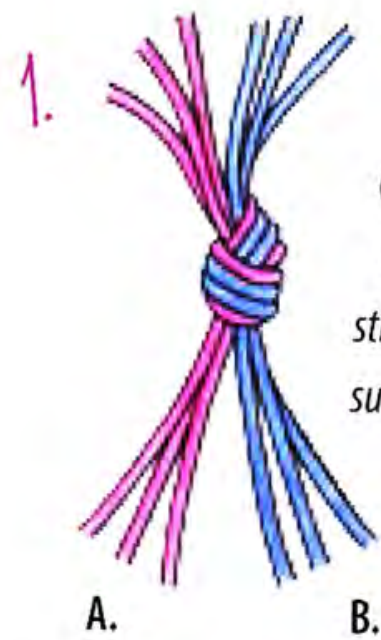


Ideas

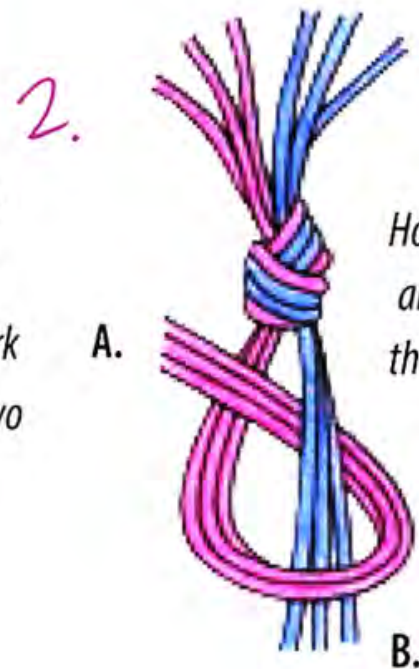
- Bored of beads? Try finding things around your house or outside, like seashells and buttons!
- Make a bead-less friendship bracelet using only string. Follow the instructions below to make them!



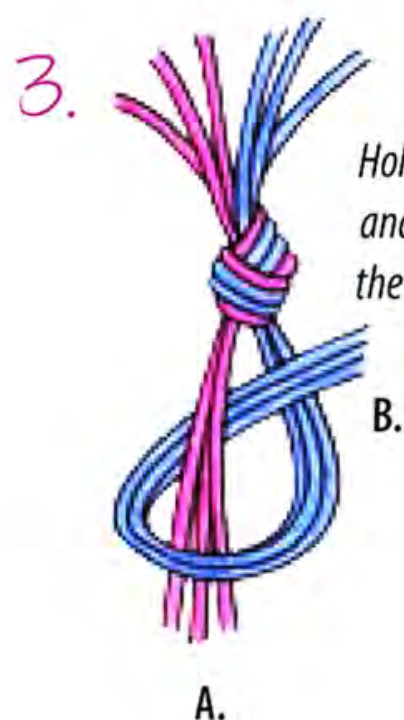
DOUBLE KNOT BRACELET



1. Choose two colors, and cut three equal strands of each. Knot the strands together and secure to work surface. Separate the colors into two bunches (A and B).



2. Hold the B strings on the right straight and taut. Then place the A strings on the left over the B strings on the right, and make a forward knot.



3. Hold the A strings on the left straight and taut. Then place the B strings on the right over the A strings on the left to make a backward knot.



4. Repeat process until bracelet is desired length.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/z3mTshB74hiYVZ7p9>

Additional Resources

- You can [purchase string and beads at multiple sites, including Amazon](#)
- Watch a [video of how to make a friendship bracelet](#) for more visual instruction



5

KNIT A TWIDDLE MUFF



Why do it?

A Twiddle Muff is a knitted hand muff with bits-and-bobs attached. Knitting can be therapeutic, relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety, as the repetitive task can stimulate a relaxing environment. Having the Twiddle Muff can then stimulate senses and keep your loved one's hands busy!

Steps

1. If you or your loved one has previous knitting experience, knit the Twiddle Muff following these specific instructions which can be found at [The Golden Carers Website](#).
2. Decorate the Twiddle Muff with anything you want (buttons, beads, buckles, flowers) using a sewing needle and thread.



<https://images.app.goo.gl/jzUEs72oPkGSgeWr5>

Materials Needed

- Yarn or wool
- Knitting needles
- Anything you want to put on the Twiddle Muff (buttons, beads, ribbons, etc.)
- Sewing needle and thread



Adjust Difficulty



If your loved one already has knitting skills, have them make their own Twiddle Muff. If they don't want to make one, encourage them to knit anything else that they know how to do!

If your loved one is unable to knit, simply making or buying them a Twiddle Muff can help stimulate their senses – ask them what decorations they want to put on it!



Safety



Ensure that all decorations on the Twiddle Muff are well-sewn on so that your loved one cannot take them out. Sewing needles are sharp and should be used with caution.

Additional Resources



There are many other things you can knit to stimulate your senses. For example, consider knitting items such as [wooly pom-poms](#) or a [simple scarf](#). You can also [buy Twiddle Muffs on Etsy!](#)

6

MAKE A BIRD FEEDER



Materials Needed

- Popsicle sticks
- Glue
- String



Why do it?

If you or your loved one enjoys bird watching, this activity is just for you. Make your own bird feeder and watch the birds fly in!

Steps

1. Gather all materials
2. Start arranging and gluing together the popsicle sticks. First, make a flat base, then build borders on all four sides using 6–10 popsicle sticks (for an example, consult the picture below).
3. Tie four strings at each corner and make one large knot at the end of the strings to hold it all together.
4. Pour bird seeds into the feeder and place it on a branch nearby.
5. Wait and watch for the birds!



Adjust Difficulty



- Guide your loved one through the instructions, but let them do the majority of the steps!
- Create more difficult bird feeders.

- Choose an easier bird feeder design to create.
- Create the bird feeder yourself, and sit down with your loved one to watch as the birds fly in to feed!

Safety



Stay with your loved one to ensure proper use of glue and bird seeds. Glue may be toxic if ingested.

Additional Resources

Other types of bird feeders can be made depending on your and your loved one's abilities. This [DIY site](#) provides many different ideas for easier bird feeders such as cheerio or orange cup bird feeders, as well as more difficult ones to make!



7

MAKE ORNAMENTS



Why do it?

Get creative by making different ornaments with salt dough, and then decorate your home with them! This activity works on creativity, fine motor skills, and tactile stimulation.

Materials Needed

- 4 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1.5 cups water
- Food colouring (optional)
- Cookie cutters
- Rolling Pin
- Paint and Paintbrush (optional)

Steps

Salt Dough Recipe taken from [this site](#):

1. Combine flour, salt and water (and food colouring if desired), and knead the dough for 10 minutes.
2. Roll out the dough and cut it into desired shapes.
3. Make imprints on the dough using fingers and hands or other tools!
4. Make a small hole at the top of your ornament so that you can hang it with a string later.
5. Bake in a 250°F oven for 1-2 hours, until hard.
6. Take the ornaments out of the oven, let them cool and decorate them by painting on them if desired!



Safety



- Supervise your loved one close to the oven and hot trays.
- Operate the oven yourself, making sure to turn it off once you are done and wear oven mitts when taking things in-and-out.

7

MAKE ORNAMENTS

↑ Adjust Difficulty ↓

Physical

- Let your loved one engage in as many steps of the activity as possible, being cautious and supervising when working with the oven and hot surfaces.

Cognitive

- Make the ornaments yourself, asking your loved one for preferred colours and shapes.
- Pre-make the dough for the ornaments and have your loved one roll it out, cut them and put designs on them using their hands, as possible.



Idea



Do this activity while listening to music and chatting to enhance the social environment!

Additional Resources



- For more visual learners, watch [the video instructions on how to make salt dough!](#)
- If you want to stimulate your senses a little more, check out the cinnamon ornaments in the 'Stimulate your Senses' section!

8

CREATE A SCRAPBOOK



Why do it?

Making a scrapbook together can be a way to reminisce and share stories, while also allowing a person to work on their creativity and fine motor skills.



Materials Needed

- Notebook
- Glue Stick
- Photos
- Scissors
- Colored Paper
- Magazines with recipes (optional)

Safety



Use non-toxic glue and safety scissors to decrease risk of injury.

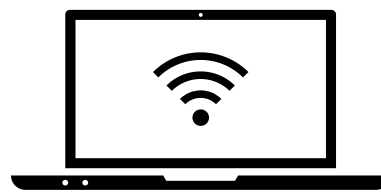
Steps

1. Find any type of notebook or a binder full of white pages.
2. Gather personal photos, coloured paper, preferred images from magazines or anything else that you want to put in the scrapbook.
3. Glue personal photos, images and coloured paper onto pages of the notebook and write down anything you want next to them!



8

CREATE A SCRAPBOOK



Adjust Difficulty



Cognitive

- Have your loved one gather all the materials they want to put into their scrapbook independently.

- Let your loved one choose which item to glue on.

Physical

- Let your loved one glue, cut and write notes next to the images independently.

- Pre-cut patterns and images from magazines.
- Glue each item on the notebook and write notes for them.



Ideas



- Love cooking? Cut out your favourite recipes from magazines or newspapers and glue them onto your scrapbook!
- Love nature? Pick up your favorite leaves or flowers, dry and press them, then glue them in!

Additional Resources



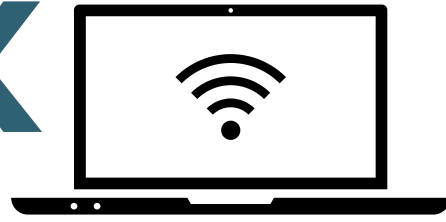
This activity can be done online through a virtual scrapbook maker. Once created, purchase your scrapbook and have it delivered to you. Make your own scrapbook online today!

To make this activity more nostalgic, check out the next page!



9

CREATE A MEMORY BOOK



Why do it?

This is an alternative to scrapbooking! Making a book is a great way to tell stories and look at pictures together. Reading it regularly may bring a sense of comfort in the later stages of dementia.

Materials Needed

Memorabilia such as:

- Old photographs
- Maps
- Postcards
- Letters
- Ticket stubs
- Drawings
- Blank scrapbook
- Glue
- Scissors

Steps

1. Spread out all the memorabilia on a table.
2. Assist your loved one to arrange the photos and other items onto blank scrapbook pages.
3. Assist your loved one to glue down all the items and write captions to go along with the memorabilia.
4. Review the book together regularly and keep it visible for easy access.

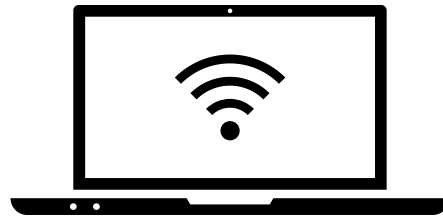


Safety

Be careful with scissors. You may want to do the cutting if you feel your loved one may not do so safely, or use safety scissors.

9

CREATE A MEMORY BOOK



Ask friends and family of your loved one to contribute items to the book. If they have a memory to share, have them write it down to add to the book.



Adjust Difficulty

Ask your loved one for stories they want to add to the book.

Read the written stories out loud to your loved one and point out who people are in the pictures.



Notes

When looking through the book together, avoid quizzing your loved one. Ex: "do you know who that is?" or "do you remember when?" This may make them feel as though they are being tested and could make them upset.

Additional Resources

Memory books can be created using existing applications on your iPad or mobile device. Use apps such as MemLife, Book Creator and Pictello!



10 PAINT, DRAW, COLLAGE



Why do it?

Engaging in artistic activities can help with stress relief and relaxation, decreasing possible negative external behaviours. It also enables your loved one to engage using their fine motor skills and can improve overall quality of life.

Steps

1. Gather materials needed for either painting, drawing or collaging.
 - If using paint, make sure to put some newspaper underneath to avoid unwanted painting of surfaces!

2. Get creative!

- Draw and decorate a card to give out for different events such as the holiday seasons!
- Paint a bookmark to keep track of your next read in style.
- Collage a memory board to engage in a reminiscing activity; do this by choosing pictures, images from magazines, or anything else that provides a blast from the past and has meaning. Consider adding a little note to each picture to provide context!



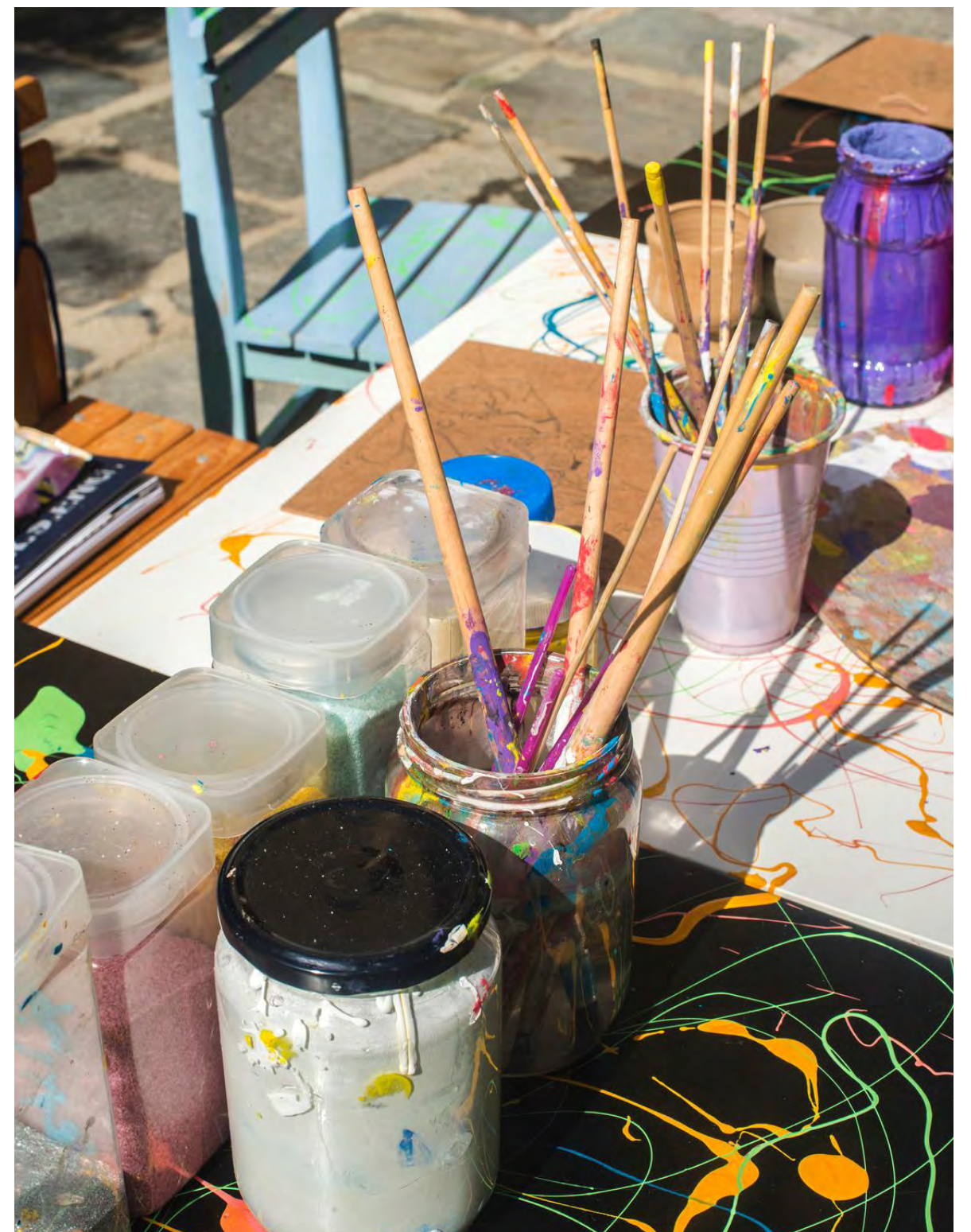
Materials Needed

Painting/Drawing

- Canvas or Paper
- Different colors of paint
- Paintbrushes
- Balloons for balloon stamping
- Pencils or pens
- Watercolor or Crayons

Collaging

- Coloured paper
- Pens and Pencils
- Glue
- Pictures
- Magazines
- Newspapers



Safety

Use supervision at all times to ensure proper use of non-toxic paint, markers, crayons and glue. Some materials may be toxic if ingested.



10

PAINT, DRAW, COLLAGE



↑ Adjust Difficulty ↓

Cognitive

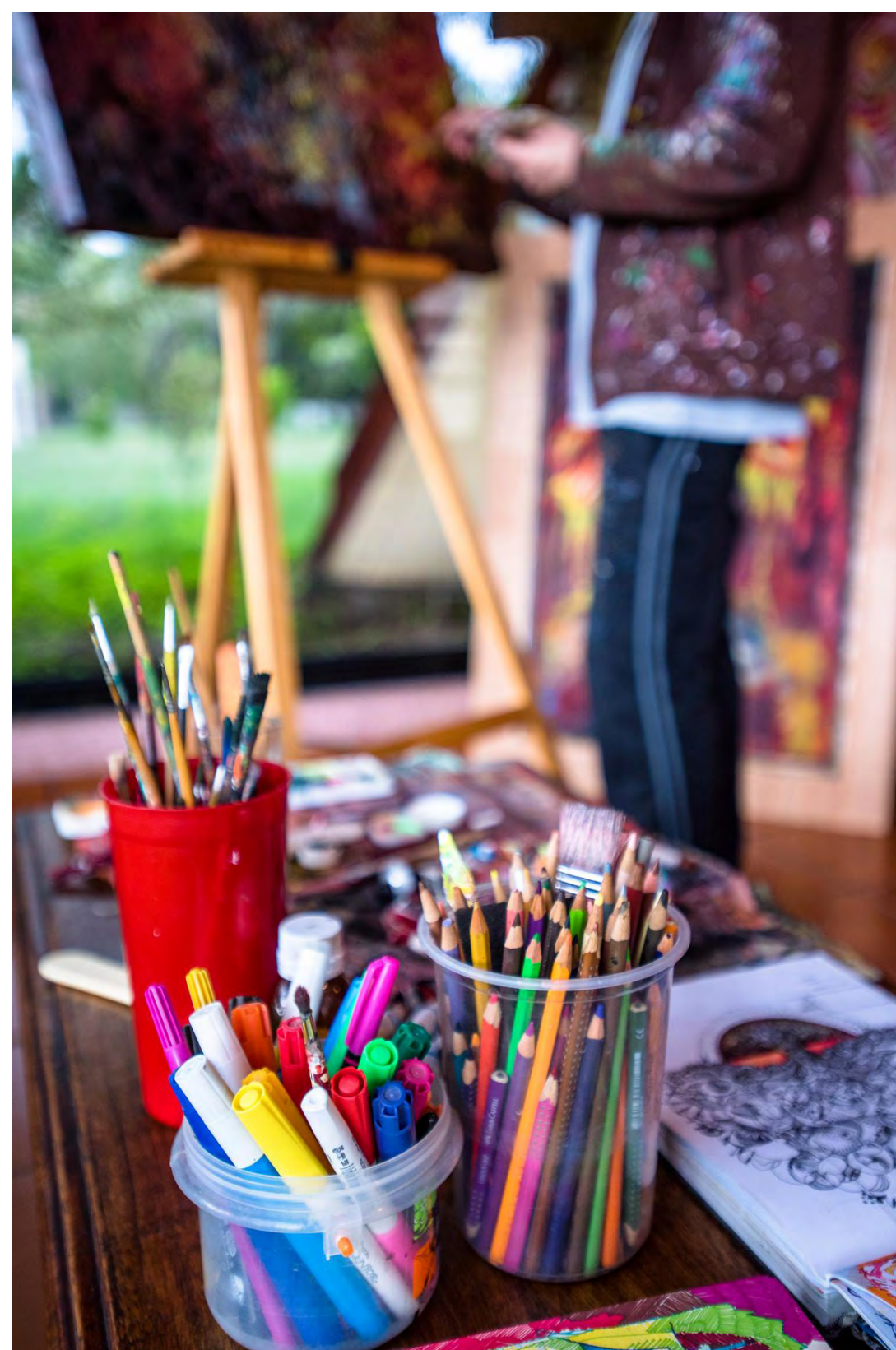
- Have your loved one engage in all steps required to complete their creation independently.

- Pre-cut and organize all materials ahead of time.

Physical

- Use paintbrushes to paint.

- Use finger painting or balloon stamping if fine motor skills are reduced; this also allows for great tactile stimulation.



Notes

Even if your loved one's abilities prevent them from engaging in these activities, always give them as much control as possible. Ask them what paint, marker or paper colour they want to use, where and what they want to paint or draw, or what they want to glue on their collages. Have fun with it!



Additional Ideas



- If your loved one is non-verbal, have them draw how they are feeling that day. This could be in the form of faces, scribbles, lines - this can help to facilitate communication.
- If unable to hold a paintbrush or writing utensil, you can use balloon stamping OR draw and "paint" on a computer and through apps such as Autodesk SketchBook.
- Collage online.
- Find any other site or app by simply googling "collage online", "paint online" or "draw online"!

11

STRESS- RELIEVING COLOURING

Why do it?

Colouring can be stress relieving and can promote relaxation while improving manual dexterity.

Steps

1. Choose the preferred image you and your loved one want to colour
2. Using markers, crayons, or paint, colour in the chosen images.

Safety

Ensure the markers or colouring utensils are non-toxic.



Cognitive

- Use more complex designs and allow for more creativity in colours.
- Use a colour-by-number colouring page to stimulate cognition.

Physical

- Use paint brushes and fine tip markers.

- Use simpler designs.
- Use a virtual colouring book which requires tapping on the screen to colour if fine motor abilities are affected.

↑ Adjust Difficulty ↓

Resources

There are many different websites where you can find printable colouring pages, or buy colouring books for adults. Consider purchasing a colouring book made specifically for individuals with dementia:

- [Free Printable Colouring Pages](#)
 - [Easier Colouring Pages](#)
 - [Harder Colouring Pages](#)
- [Adult Colouring Book](#)
- [Colouring Book for Individuals with Dementia](#)

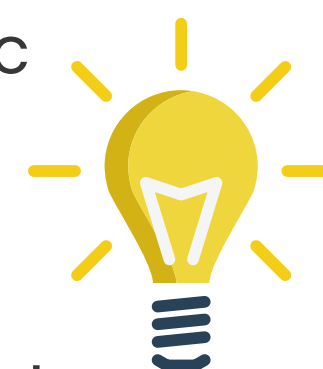


There are also virtual colouring books on apps using an iPad or computer if that is more suitable:

- [Colouring Book Apps](#)



Play calming music while colouring, or do this activity outside to further enhance relaxation!



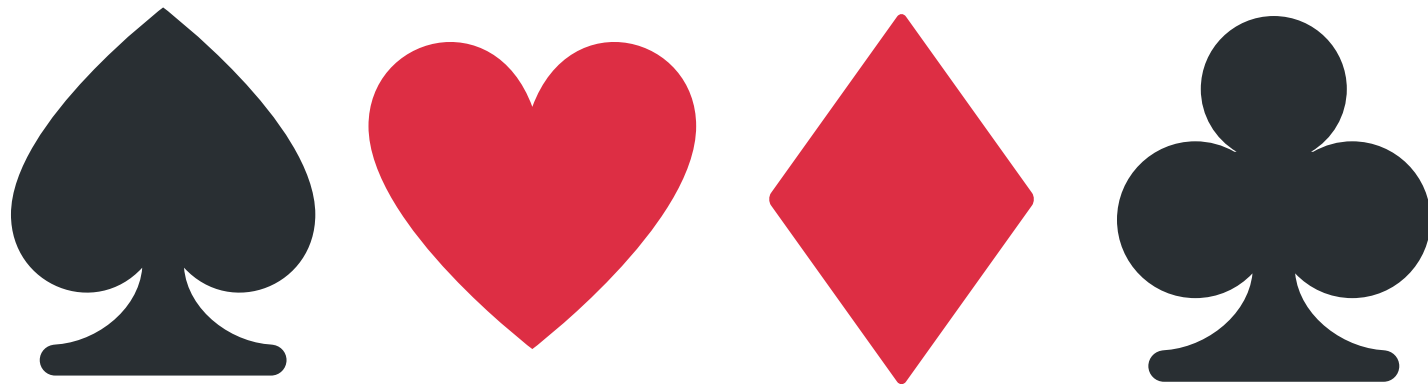
BRAIN GAMES



As the brain is one of the most essential organs in the body, it is important to keep it as active and healthy as possible. The following activities have been chosen to stimulate cognition, recall memory, problem solving, concentration, attention and visuospatial skills among others. When choosing an activity to participate in with your loved one, consider what is meaningful to them. For example, choose a card game they have previously played or a theme for crossword puzzles they are knowledgeable about. This will ensure your loved one enjoys and remains engaged in the activity at hand.

1

CARD GAMES



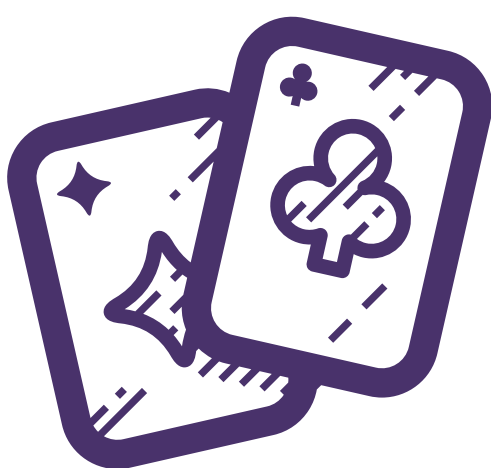
Materials Needed

Most card games require:

- Flat surface
- A standard 52-card deck
- Pen and paper if wanting to keep score

Why do it?

Playing card games is a great way to be inclusive of everyone during family time regardless of age and skill level. It involves brain stimulation and cognitive skills. Some games require memory and concentration while others require more logical reasoning skills and spatial awareness. In addition, holding cards is a great way to work on maintaining fine motor skills. Regardless of the card game chosen, your loved one is sure to enjoy themselves while keeping their brain active and healthy.

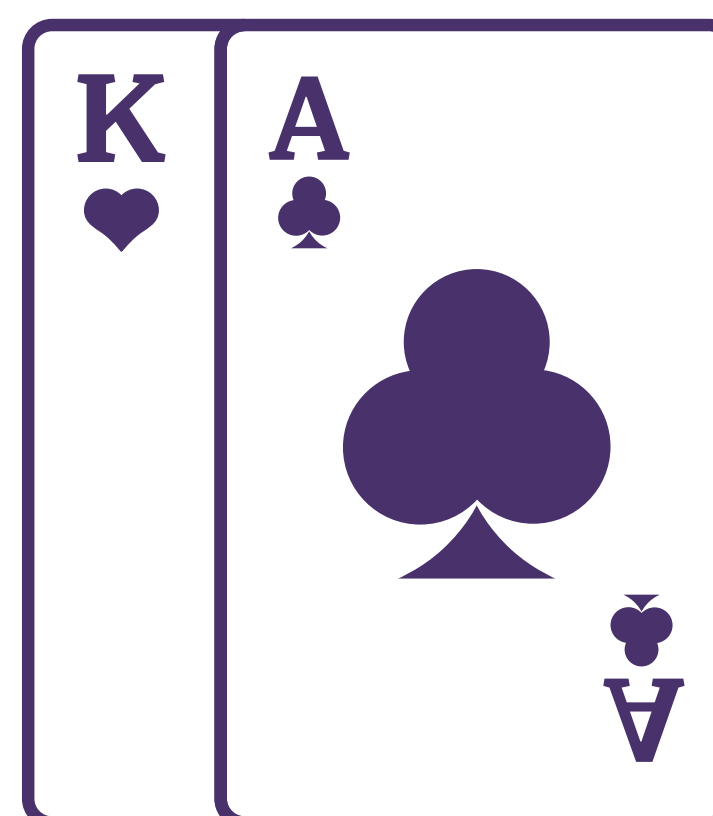


Standard 52-card decks and other specialized decks can be purchased from your local games stores, online on websites such as [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com), or from larger box stores such as [Walmart](https://www.walmart.com). Rules for various games can be found online at [bicyclecards.com](https://www.bicyclecards.com)



1

CARD GAMES



Adjust Difficulty



- Play with more rules.
- Add in some competition by keeping score.

- Decrease the number of rules.
- Play for fun by not keeping score.
- Play with fewer cards.
- If your loved one has vision difficulties, seek out cards with large print numbers.

Notes

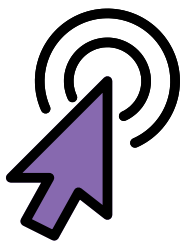
Some card games revolve around strategy while others are more based on chance. When choosing a card game to play, consider your loved ones interests and experience playing cards.



Card games of varying difficulty are listed on the next few pages. Included are their corresponding rules and materials needed.

1

CARD GAMES



GO FISH

2+

The Deal - A standard 52-card deck is used. Cards are dealt out clockwise, face down with each player getting seven (2-3 players) or five cards (4+ players). The remainder of the cards are spread out face down on the table in front of all players.



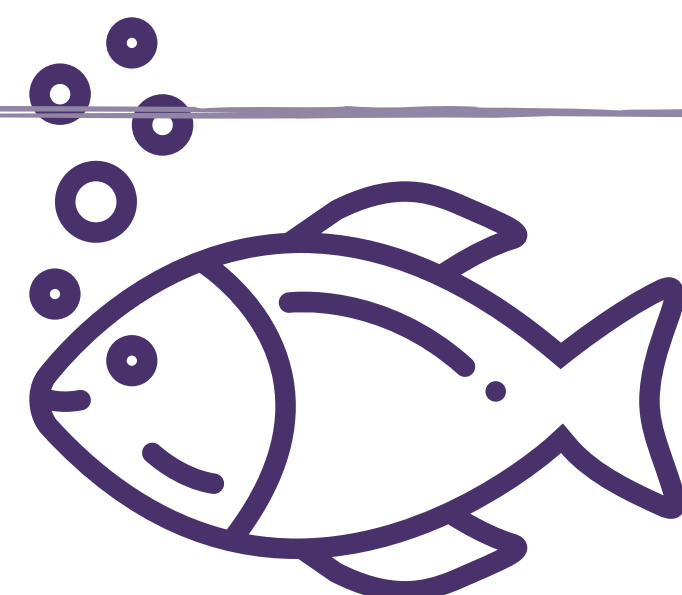
The Play - The goal of the game is to get as many pairs of numbers as possible. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each player takes a turn asking another player if they have a particular card.

- For example, player 1 asks player 2 "do you have any sevens?" If player 2 has a seven, they must hand it over to player 1, who removes the now made pair of cards to display in front of them. As player 1 was successful at making a pair, they continue on with their turn, asking another player for another card.
- If player 2 did not have any sevens, they would tell player 1 to "go fish", ending player 1's turn. Player 1 will now choose one card from the fanned out deck to move into their hand. It is now player 2's turn.

Game play continues until there are no more cards in the deck left unmatched. Player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

** If the card picked up from the the table matches any card in the players hand, they remove the matched cards from their hand and pick up another card from the table.

Adjust the difficulty of the game by creating pairs of 4, pairing both number and suit colour, or playing with fewer cards or more cards.



1

CARD GAMES



CRAZY EIGHTS 2+

The Deal – A standard 52-card deck is used. Cards are dealt out clockwise, face down with each player getting eight cards. The remainder of the cards are placed in a pile face down (draw pile). The top card is turned face up and placed beside the draw pile to create the discard pile.

The Play – The goal of the game is to be the first player to get rid of all the cards in their hand. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, players take turns playing cards from their hand onto the discard pile, matching either suit or card number. Eights of any suit are wild and can be played on top of any card to change the suit. For example, if a seven of spades is on top of the discard pile, either another spade, a seven, or a wild eight can be played on top. If a player cannot discard the following suit or number, they pick up one card from the draw pile to add to their hand and their turn is over. Players take turns discarding cards until one player has no more cards in their hand. This player is the winner.

** If the draw pile empties, one player can shuffle the discard pile, leaving the last card discarded for reference, and create a new draw pile.

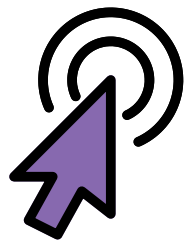
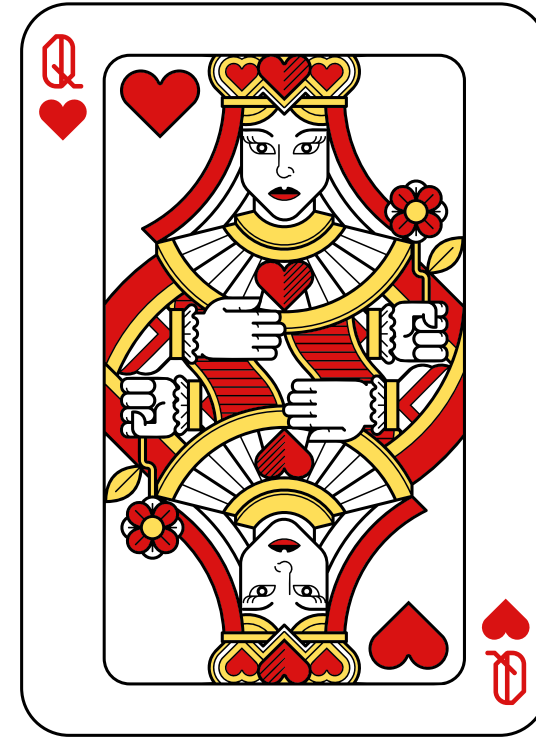


Adjust the difficulty of the game by adding other rules:

- 1) Two of any suit = next player picks up two cards from the discard pile before taking their turn.
- 2) Queen of spades = next player picks up six cards from discard pile before taking their turn.
- 3) Jack of any suit = next player picks up one card from draw pile and misses their turn.
- 4) Pick up until you can play = instead of picking up one card from draw pile if you cannot play, continue to pick up a card until one can be matched to the discard pile.

1

CARD GAMES



OLD MAID

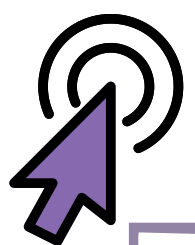
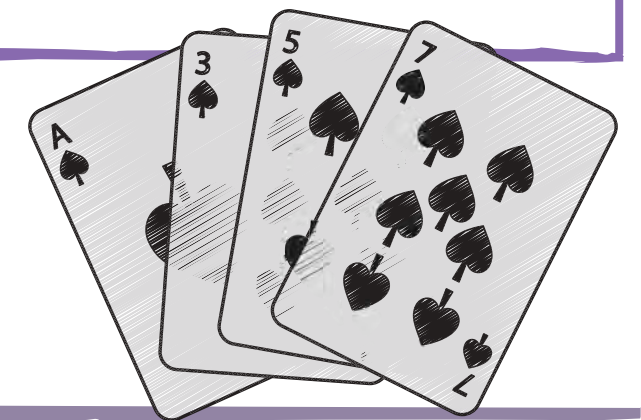
2+



The Deal – A standard 52-card deck is used with one queen removed. Specialized card packs also exist for this game with the 'old maid' identified. Cards are dealt out face down, one-by-one to each player until all cards have been distributed.

The Play – Game play begins with each player removing all pairs from their hand, displaying them in front of themselves face down. If a player has three of the same number, they must choose two of the three cards to pair up and display. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each player takes a turn choosing one card from the hand of the player on their right to add to their own. As players collect cards, pairs are removed and displayed face down. Game play continues until there is only the odd-queen left. The player left with the queen is the Old Maid.

Adjust the difficulty of the game by playing with fewer or more cards, or requiring pairs to match both number and colour of suit.



SEVENS

3-8

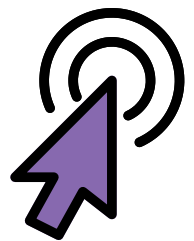
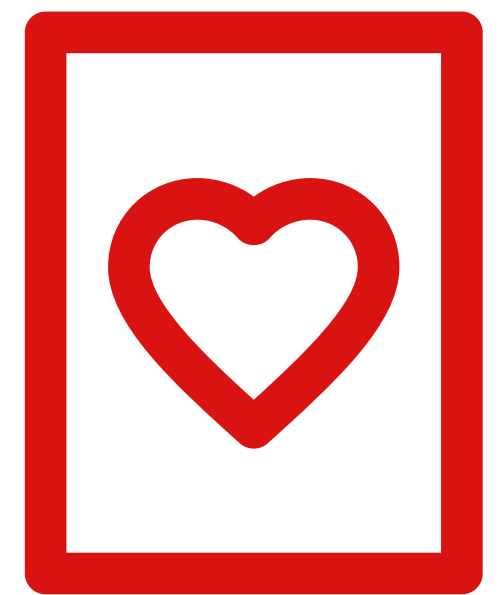
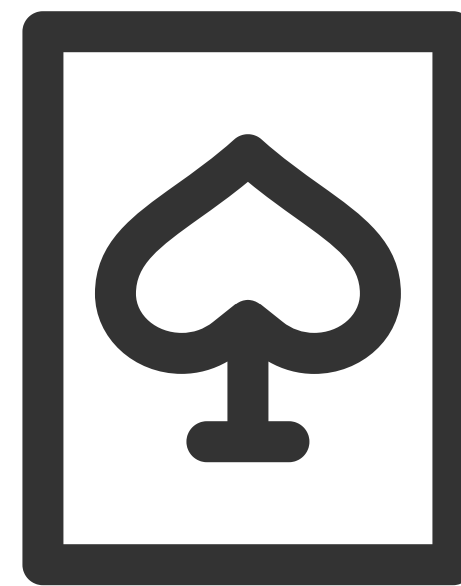


The Deal – A standard 52-card deck is used. Cards are dealt out face down, one-by-one to each player until all cards have been distributed.

The Play – Game play begins when a seven has been played in the centre of the table. Starting with the person to the left of the dealer and moving clockwise, each player takes a turn playing a seven in the middle of the table, face up, if they have been dealt one. Once a seven has been laid down, following players have the option to play on the seven, by playing either the six or the eight of the corresponding suit, or play another seven. If a player does not have a seven in their hand, or cannot play the following ascending or descending number, they must skip their turn. The first person to have laid down all cards from their hand wins.

1

CARD GAMES



SOLITAIRE (Klondike Version) 1+



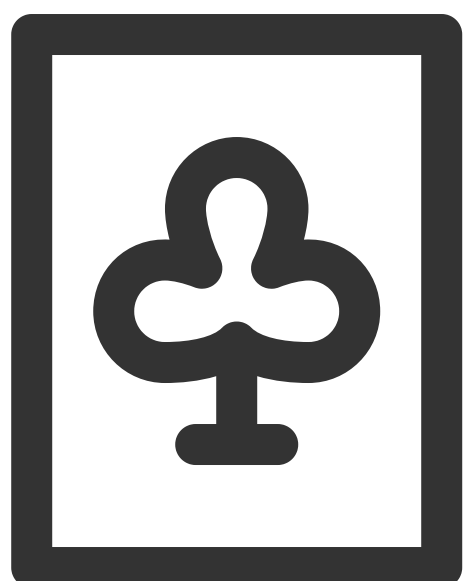
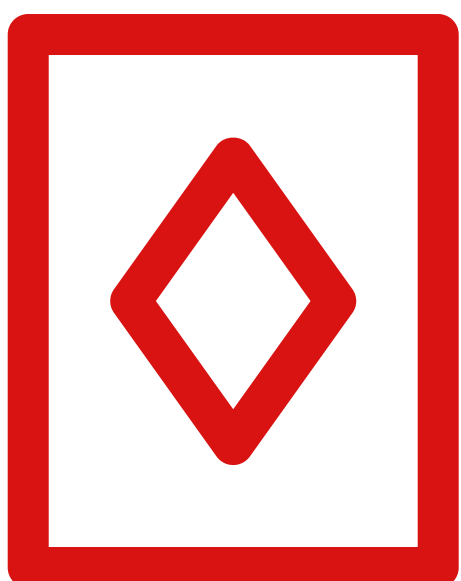
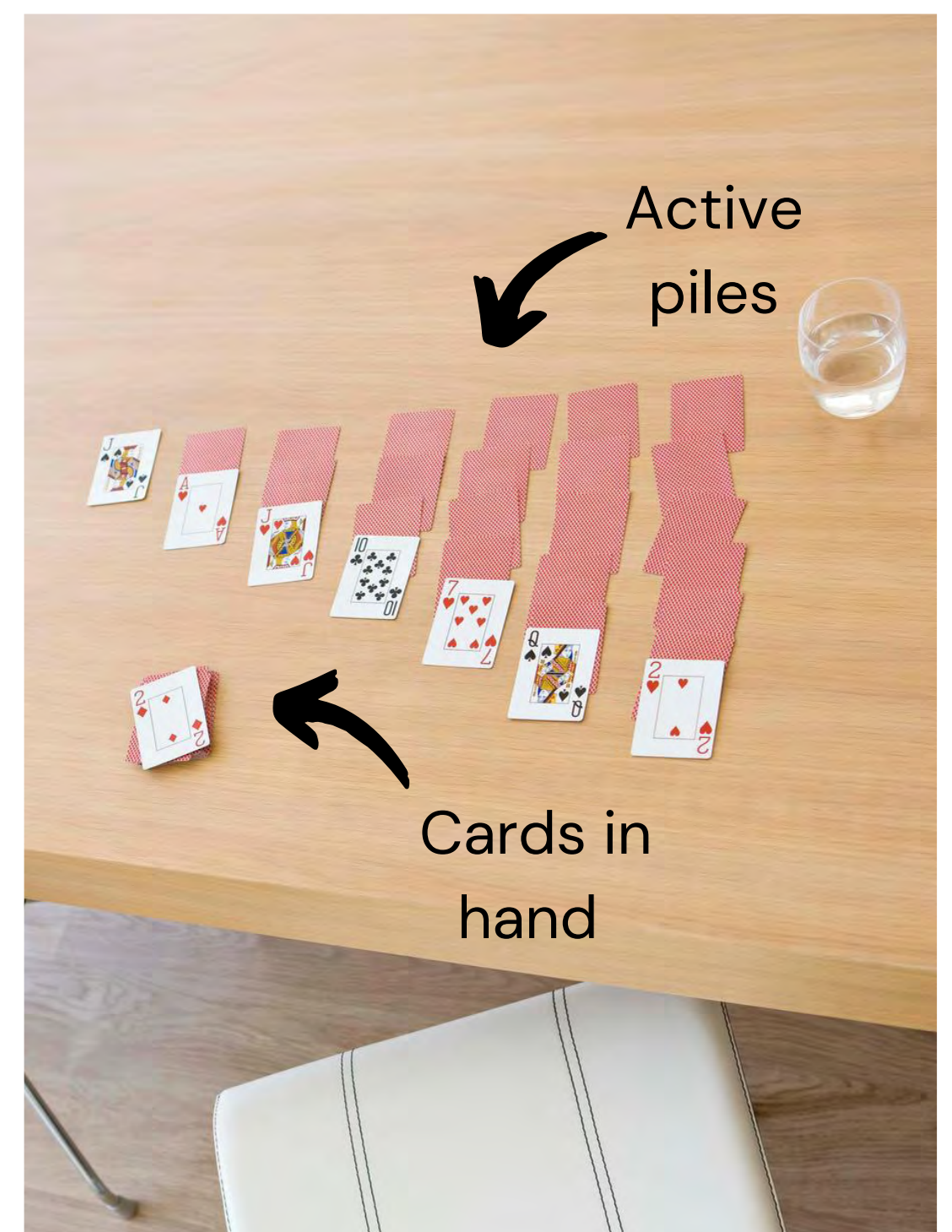
The Deal

A standard 52-card deck is used.

To set up the game, lay the top card face up followed by six cards placed face down on the right to create a row of seven. Then, place a card face up on the first face down card, followed by a face down card on each face down card to the right.

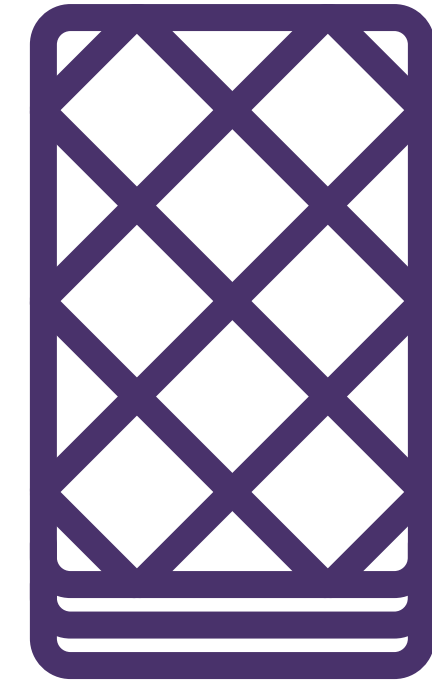
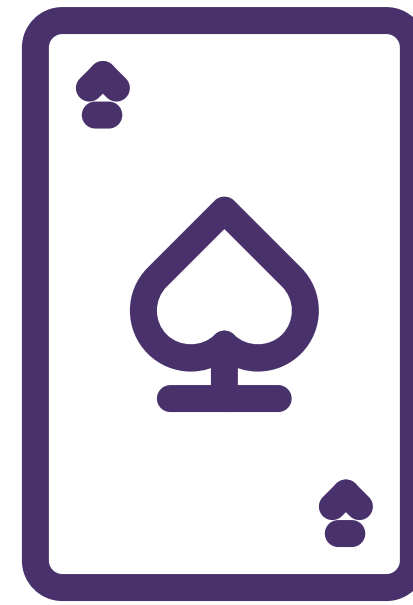
Continue this pattern until there are seven rows, each with one card face up and the remainder face down as shown in the picture on the right.

There should be one card total in the first pile, two in the second, three in the third and so on until there are seven in the seventh pile. These piles are considered the active piles. The remaining cards in the deck become your hand.



1

CARD GAMES



SOLITAIRE CONTINUED...

The Play

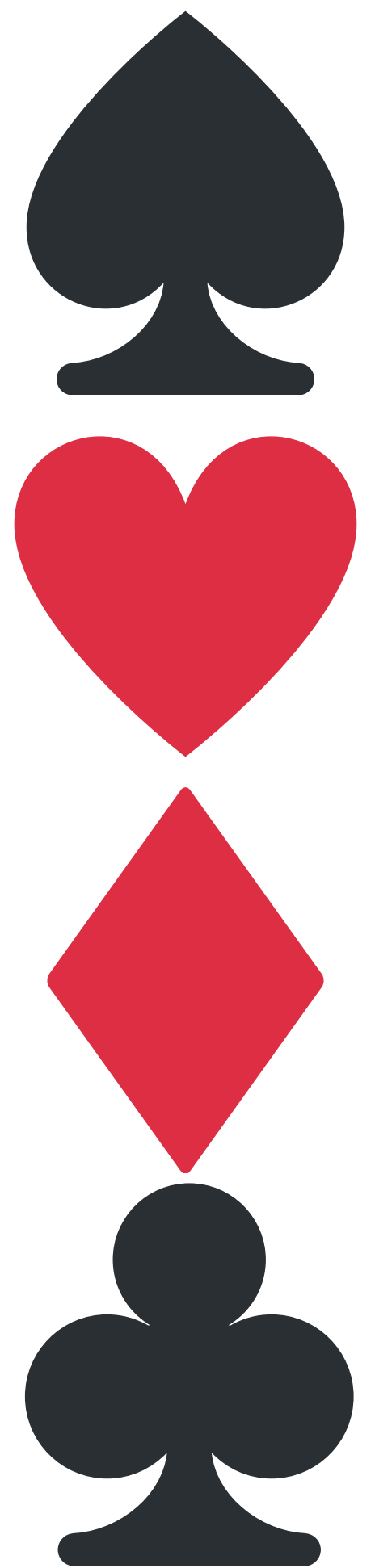
Both within your hand and in the game space, the top card is always available for play. Only when the top card is moved, can the second card in the pile or in your hand be available for play.

The object of the game is to create foundation piles, separated by suit, which are organized by ascending order from ace to king.

In order to create these foundation piles, cards may be moved from one active pile to another, as long as cards are moved to follow a descending number order and suit colours are alternating.

The cards in your hand are flipped over three at a time and can be played on foundation piles or game piles to expose cards underneath. Once you have cycled through your hand once, you can collect these cards - ensuring they stay in the same order - and cycle through them once again.

Game play continues until all 52 cards have been organized into their corresponding foundation pile, or the player cannot make any more moves.



Adjust the difficulty of the game by flipping over one card at a time from hand, or by playing double solitaire. Double solitaire is played in the same format, however all foundation piles can be played on and game play continues until one player goes out, or no more moves can be made. In this case, the player who has more cards in the foundation piles wins.

1

CARD GAMES



WAR

2-4



The Deal – A standard 52-card deck is used. Cards are dealt out face down, one-by-one to each player until all 52 cards have been distributed. Players are not to look at their hand. Keep cards in a pile face down during game play.

To Play – At the same time, all active players flip over their top card from their hand, exposing the number. The player whose card is of highest value (aces are high, twos are low) wins that round and collects all played cards to add to their hand. If two cards played are of the same value, these players are now 'at war'. Each player places three cards, face down, below the original card played. On the count of three, they add an additional card to the column, flipping it so it is face up. The player with the highest value card collects all cards on the table, including those placed face down during battle. Game play continues until one player is left with all 52 cards in their hand.

Here is a list of other card game ideas. Look for rules online!

- Uno (*requires a specialty car deck*)
- Skip-Bo (*requires a specialty card deck*)
- Cribbage
- Blackjack
- Cheat
- Spider Solitaire
- Hearts
- Rummy



CONCENTRATION 1+



The Deal – A standard 52-card deck is used. Cards are dealt out face down, one-by-one in a grid formation.

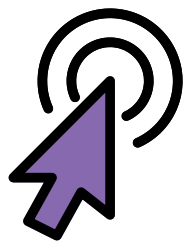
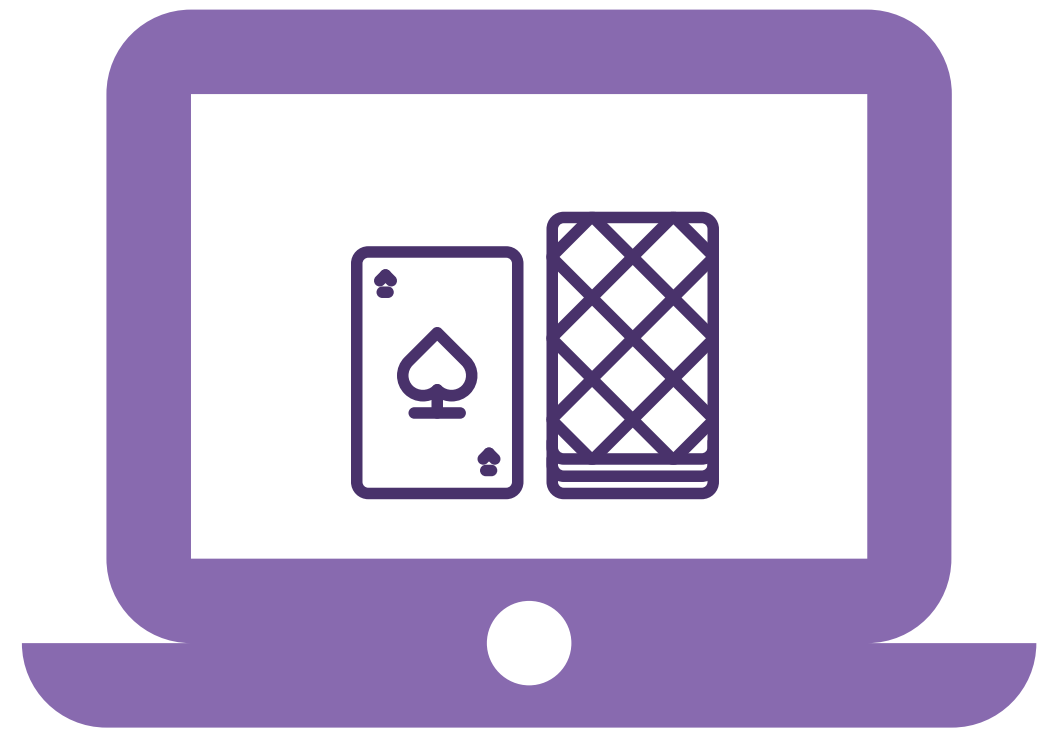
To Play – Game play begins with the person to the left of the dealer. This person chooses two cards and flips them over to reveal the number on each. If the numbers match, the player collects their pair and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, the player returns them to the face down position. It is now player 2's turn. Game play continues back-and-forth until all cards have been paired off. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

Adjust the difficulty of the game by playing by oneself or with others, playing with fewer cards or more cards, or requiring pairs to match both number and colour of suit.



1

CARD GAMES

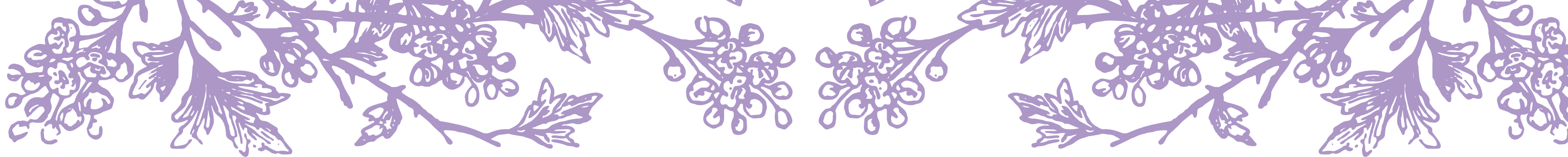


ONLINE CARD GAMES

1+



If you cannot be together in person, you can try online card games with Trickster Cards at <https://www.trickstercards.com>



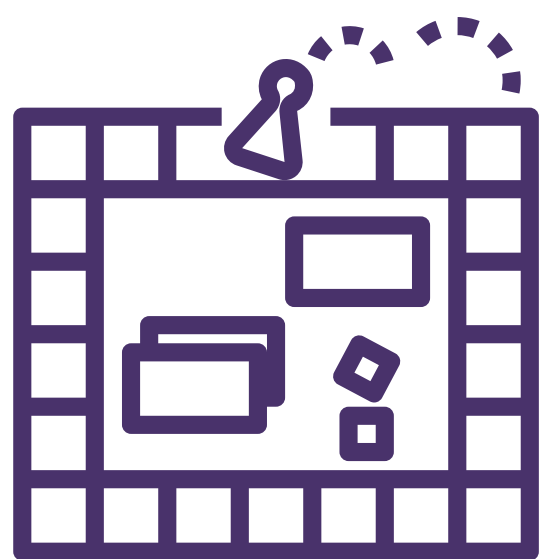
2

BOARD GAMES



Why do it?

Playing board games is a great way to be inclusive of everyone during family time regardless of age and skill level. They involve brain stimulation and cognitive skills. Some games require working memory and concentration, while others require more logical reasoning skills and spatial awareness. In addition, fine motor skills can be maintained while moving game pieces around a board. Regardless of the game chosen, your loved one is sure to enjoy themselves while keeping their brain active and healthy.

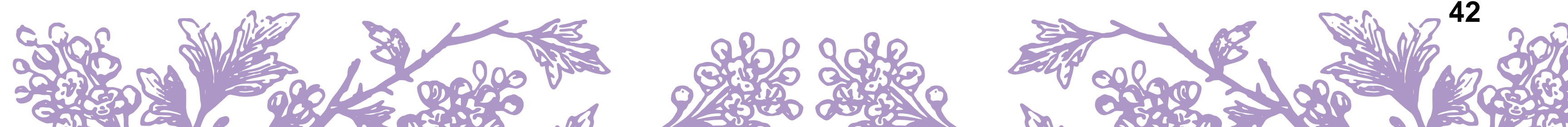


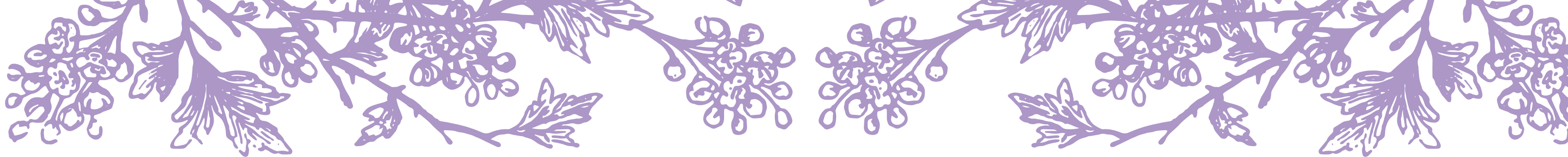
Board games vary in materials needed and complexity. Consult the specific rules provided for each game to learn more.



Safety

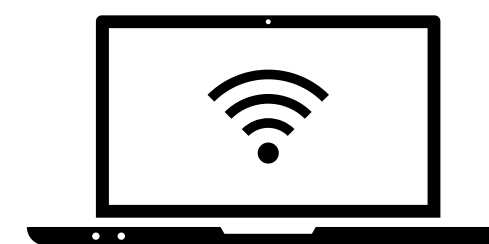
Some board games have small pieces which can be a choking hazard. If playing one of these games, use supervision.





2

BOARD GAMES



Notes



When choosing a board game to play, consider your loved one's personality. If your loved one is more analytical, choose a game that requires more planning and strategy to play.



Adjust Difficulty

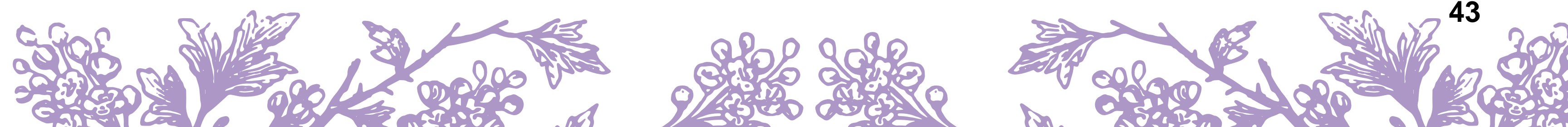
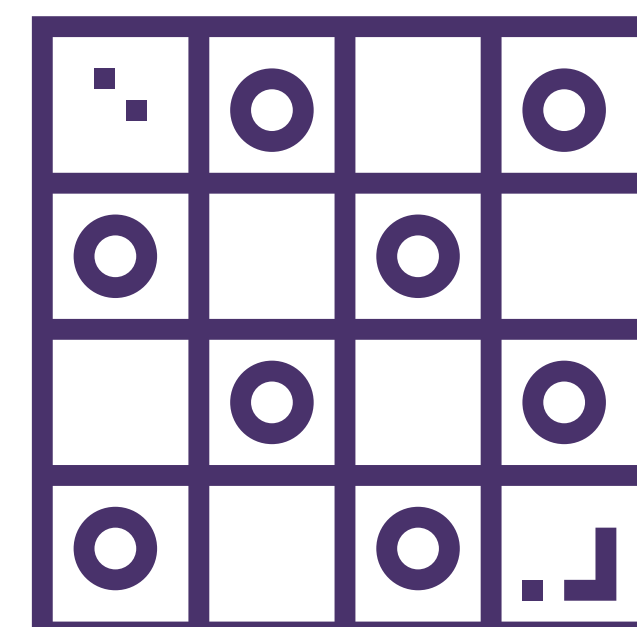


Increase cognitive and social difficulty by playing with multiple peers.

Use the children's version of board games, such as Scattergories and Bananagrams, which typically have fewer or easier rules to follow and less game pieces.

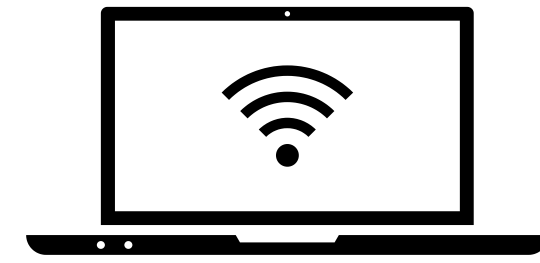


On the next few pages is a list of recommended board games of varying difficulty levels to play with your loved ones!



2

BOARD GAMES

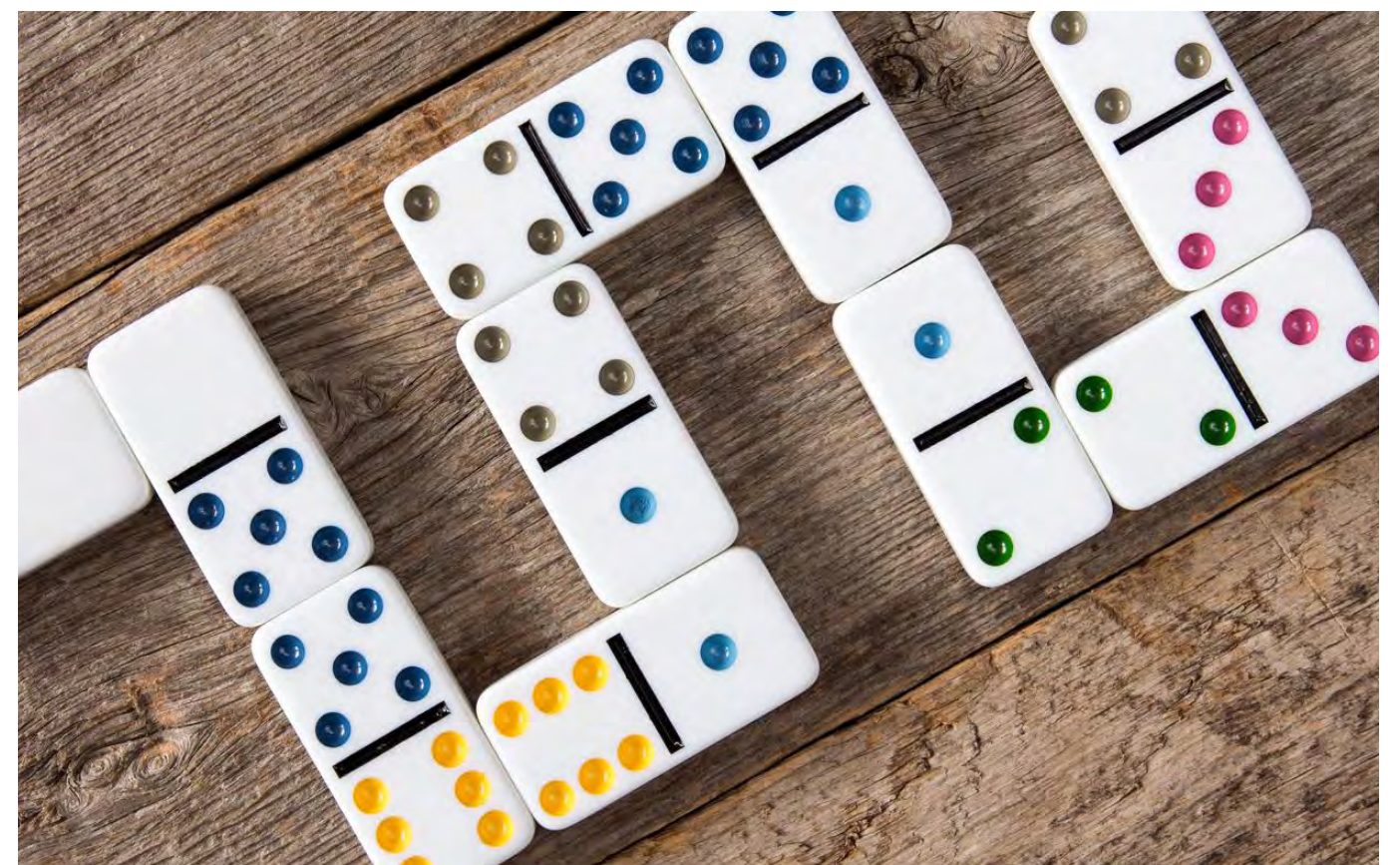


Safety



Some board games have small pieces which can be a choking hazard. If playing one of these games, use supervision.

1 Dominoes is a tile based game for **2-4 players** in which the objective of the game is to play all your dominoes before your opponent by matching up the number of spots on one end of your tile to the corresponding number on a tile already played.



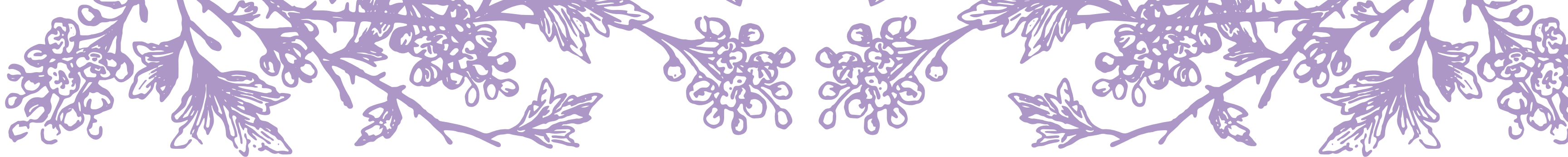
2 Yahtzee is a dice game for **1 or more player(s)** in which the objective of the game is to get the highest score at the end. To score points, players roll 5 dice up to 3 times to make certain combinations as outlined by the Yahtzee game sheet.

3 Checkers is a strategy game for **2 players** in which the objective of the game is to be the last player with their coloured game pieces on the board. This is achieved by moving pieces diagonally around the board, jumping over opponents pieces to capture them and remove them from play.

Notes

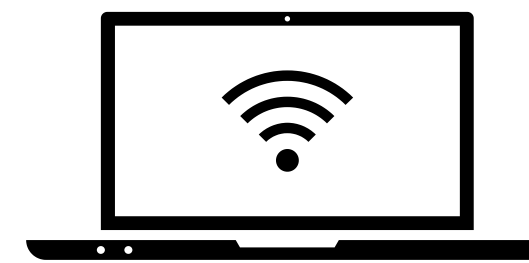


Some games can be played together even when you cannot physically be together. **Games marked by a computer screen icon can be played remotely** with either one person controlling game play, such as in Tic-Tac-Toe, or by having all players have access to game boards, such as with Battleship. Players can connect using webcams and various platforms such as FaceTime or Zoom. Consider gifting your loved ones with their own copy of games you enjoy playing together to continue playing, even when apart.



2

BOARD GAMES

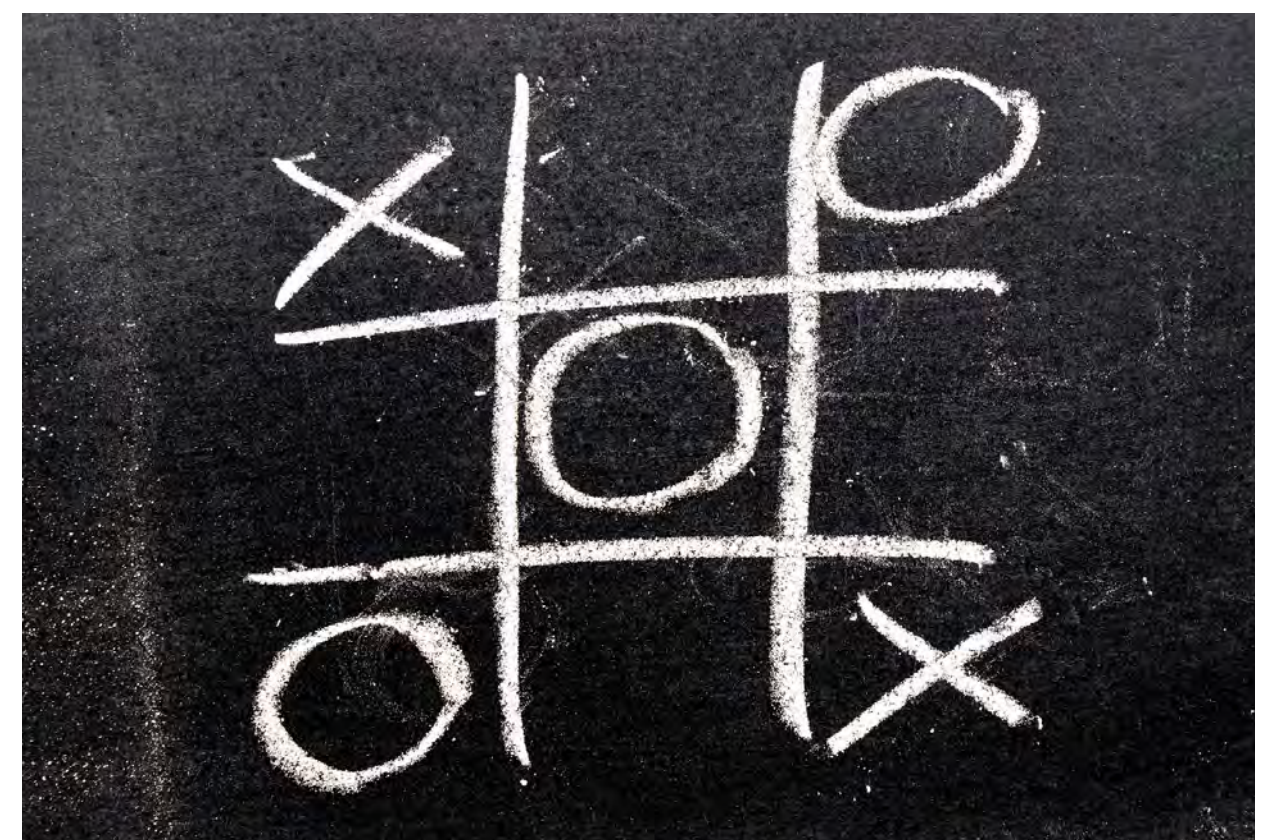


Safety



Some board games have small pieces which can be a choking hazard. If playing one of these games, use supervision.

4 Connect 4 is a strategy game for **2 players** in which the objective of the game is to take turns playing your coloured game pieces in attempts to create a 4-piece straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally before your opponent.



5 Tic-Tac-Toe is a strategy game for **2 players** in which players take turns writing either 'X' or 'O' on a 3x3 grid in attempt to create a 3-piece straight line either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally before your opponent. Click the title to play online.

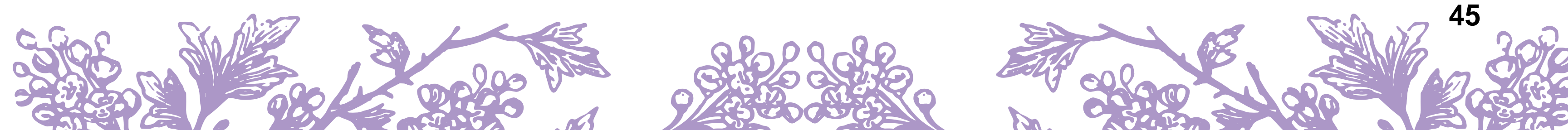
Note



Click on the underlined board game name to access game rules. Check out Ultra Board Games for other board game ideas and rules!

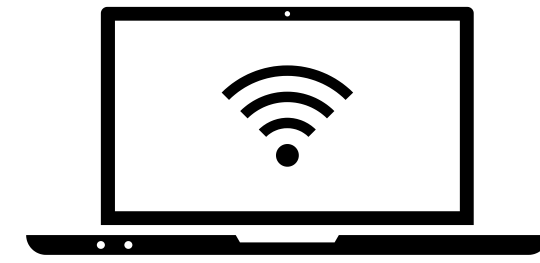


6 Battleship is a strategy based guessing game for **2 players**. Players begin by placing their 5 ships anywhere on their grid, concealed from their opponent. They then take turns guessing the position of each ship by saying the corresponding number and letter on the grid. The first player to 'sink' all their opponent's ships wins.



2

BOARD GAMES



Safety



Some board games have small pieces which can be a choking hazard. If playing one of these games, use supervision.



7 Guess Who? is a guessing game for **2 players** in which each player chooses one player card, then takes turns asking their opponent a "yes" or "no" question to narrow down what player card their opponent has. The first person to guess their opponent's player card wins.



https://www.google.com/search?q=gues+who%3F&sxsrf=ALeKkOOb6xh2jFu1rPnjqLKVg3tyoZ2MDA:1590644718454&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjdl1aCr7dXpAhXYIDQIHS6LCKEQ_AUoAXoECCIQAw&biw=1420&bih=710#imgrc=kn_6nR3VjLT4gM

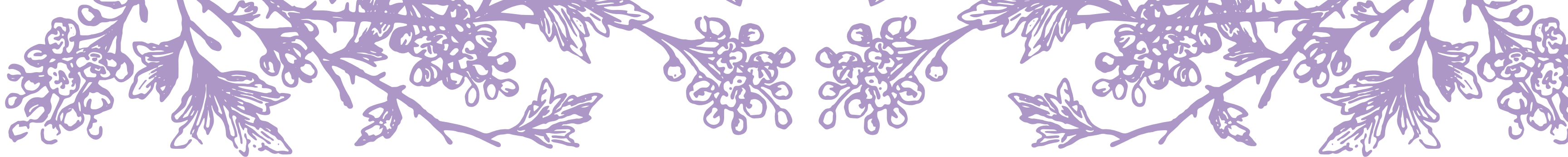


8 Bingo is a game of chance for **2 or more players** in which the objective of the game is to match the numbers called out to their Bingo card to make a straight line. This line is called a 'Bingo' and can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. The first person to get this and call out 'Bingo!' wins.



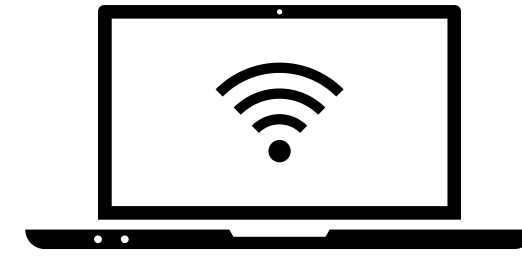
9 Trouble is a chance game for **2-4 players** in which the objective of the game is to successfully move your game pieces around the board based on the numbers rolled on the die. The first person to move all their game pieces around the board wins.





2

BOARD GAMES



Safety



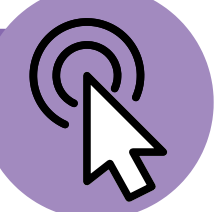
Some board games have small pieces which can be a choking hazard. If playing one of these games, use supervision.

10 Sorry is a chance game for **2-4 players** in which the objective of the game is to move all 4 of your game pieces around the board and into "home" before your opponents. Pieces move around the board according to the number of moves on the cards drawn. The first player to successfully accomplish this, wins.

11 Scattergories is a game for **2-6 players** in which players must think of the most creative answer to their given prompts, starting with a specific letter. The letter is chosen at the beginning of each round and points are given only for unique answers. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins!



Note

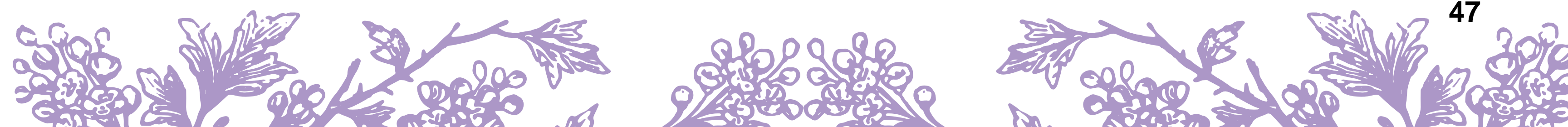
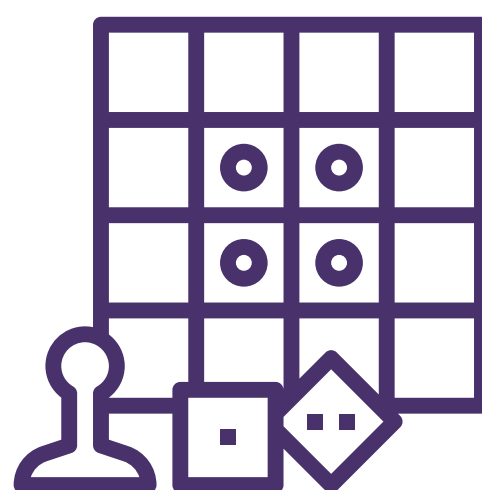
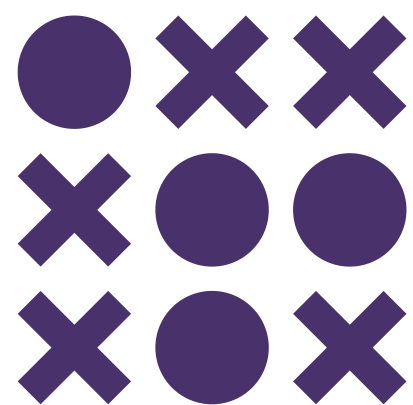
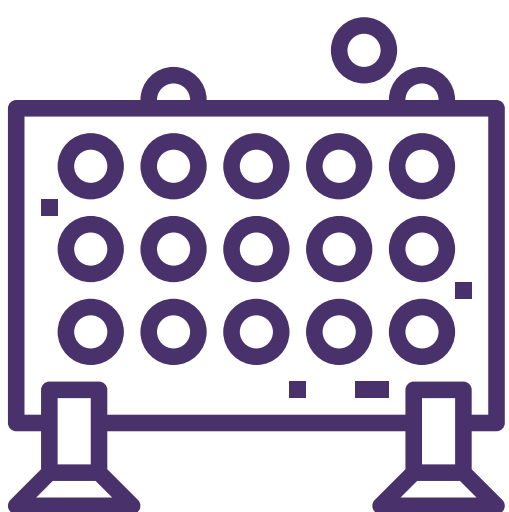


All of these games can be purchased online at Amazon, your local game store, or at a big box store near you such as Walmart!



There are many other games that can be played! Here are some games to try:

- KerPlunk
- Bananagrams
- Cranium
- Scrabble
- Qwirkle
- Chess



3 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

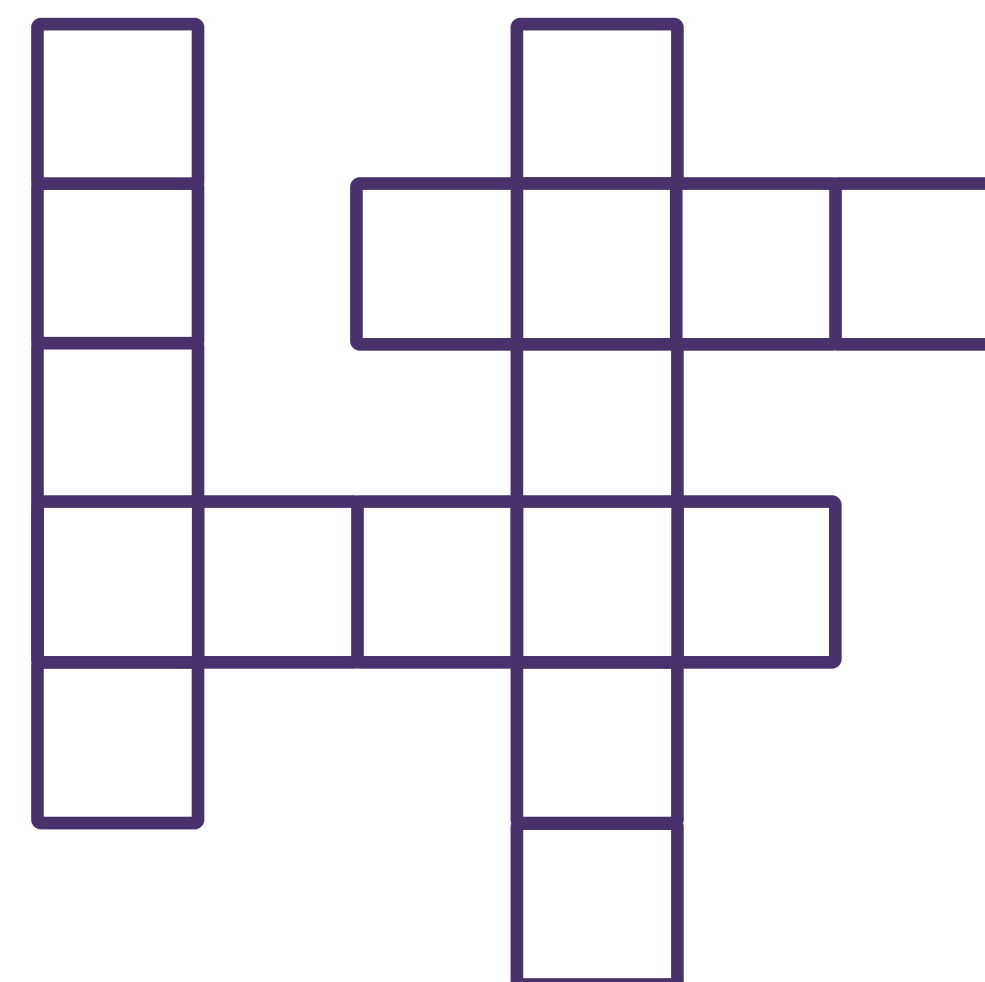


Materials Needed

- Crossword puzzle
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Sturdy chair

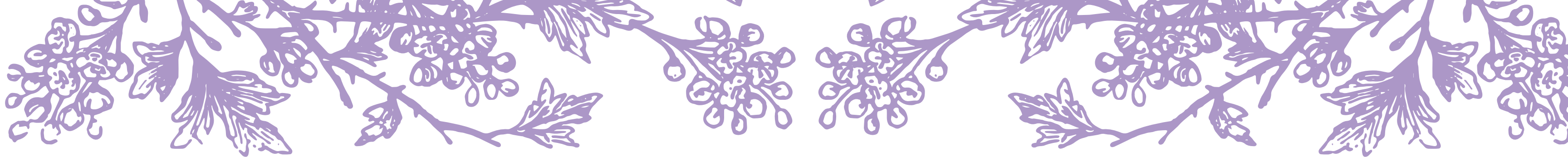
Why do it?

Crossword puzzles are word games with the objective of solving clues with words or phrases to fill in. They are an excellent way to target working memory, word recognition, concentration and attention, and can also provide a sense of accomplishment when the puzzle is completed successfully.

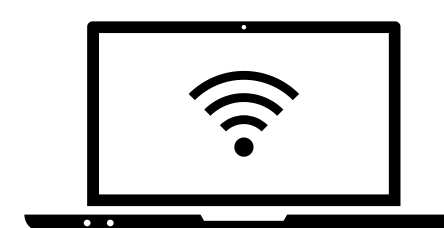


Steps

1. Choose a crossword for your loved one to complete
 - Crossword puzzles are typically themed and vary in difficulty. Choose a theme that matches your loved one's abilities and interest.
2. Sit your loved one in a sturdy chair to complete the puzzle



3 CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Cognitive



Adjust Difficulty



- Harder clues
- Larger puzzle
- Non-themed clues
- No assistance for answering clues

- Easier clues
- Smaller puzzle/fewer clues
- Themed puzzle clues
- Complete with assistance for answering clues

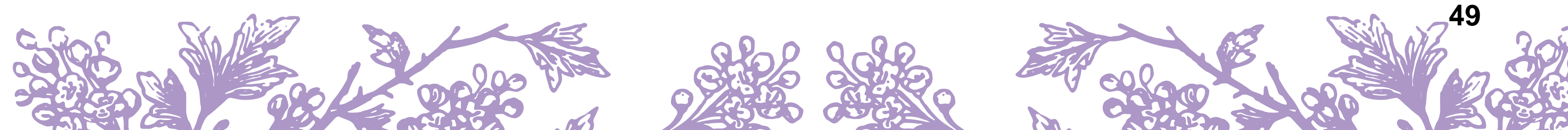
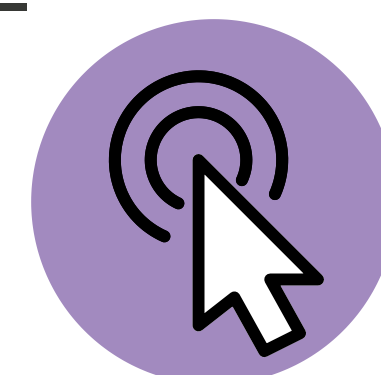


Notes

Large print puzzle books are available for those with visual impairments.

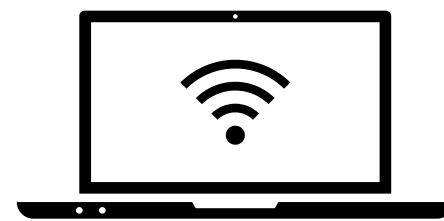
Crossword puzzles can be played both online and on paper. Many websites provide free access to online puzzles, and apps exist for the more tech-savvy individuals who may want to play on the go.

These can also be purchased from local book stores, grocery stores, dollar stores and many box stores including Walmart.



4

WORD SEARCH

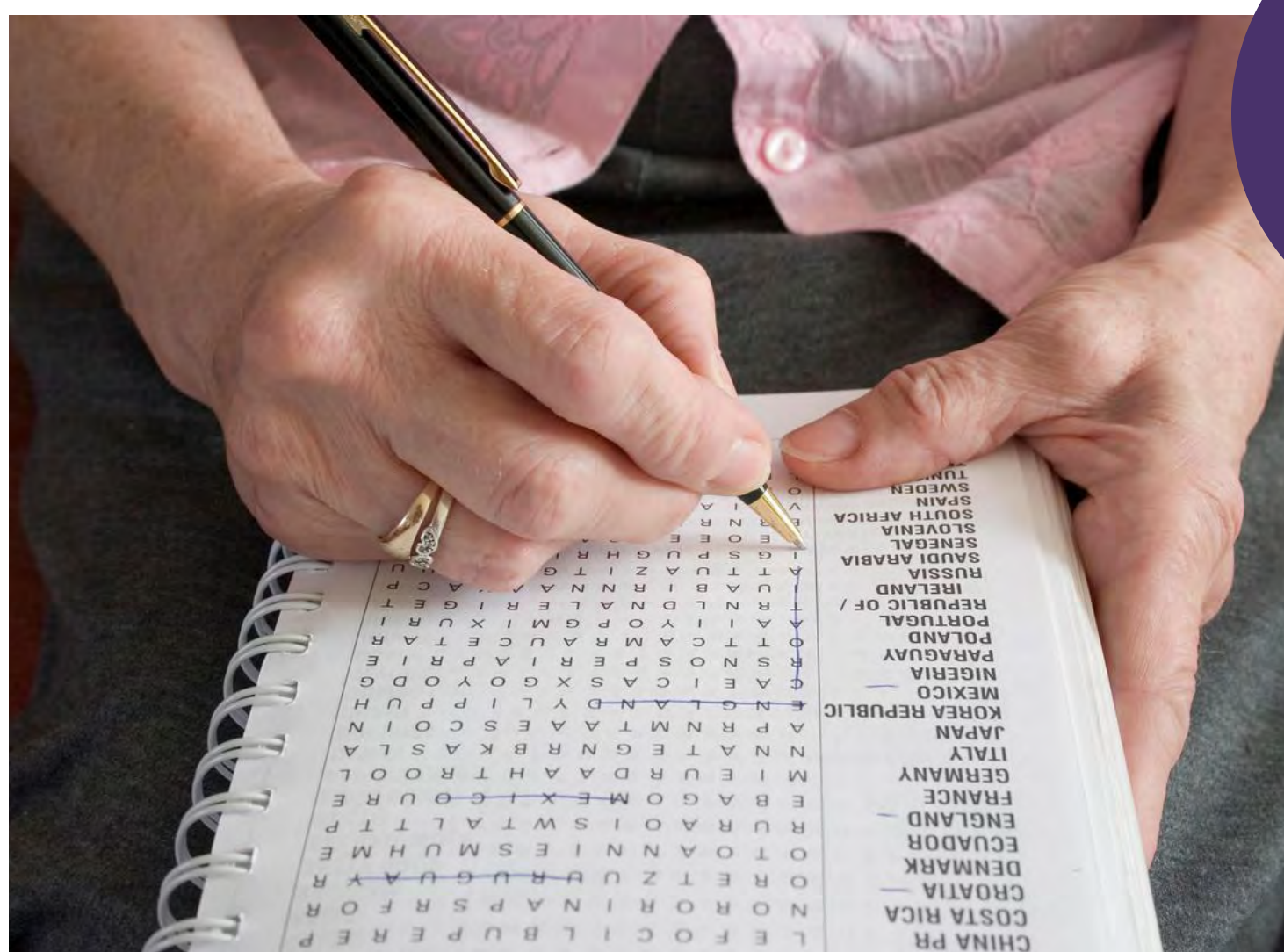
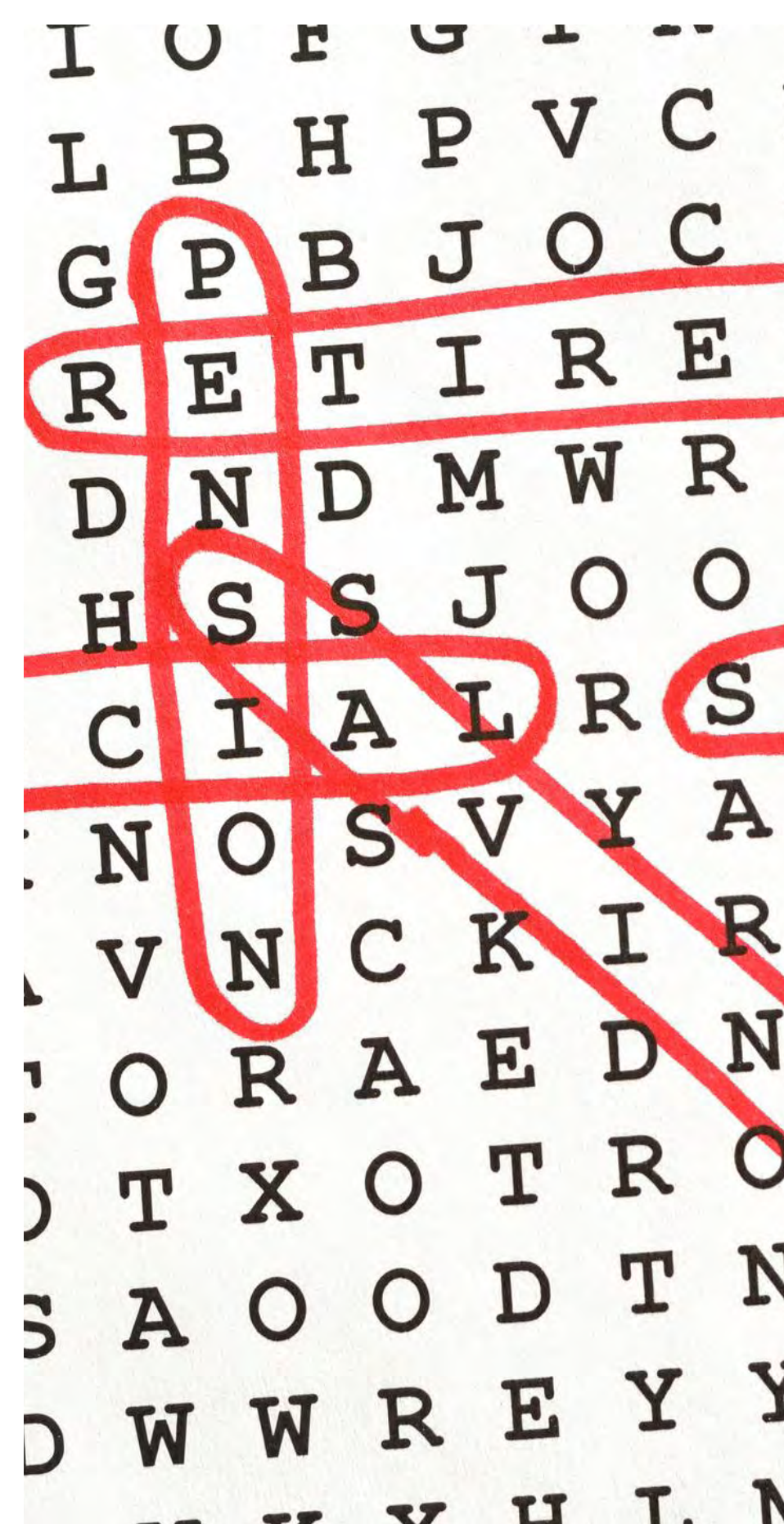


Materials Needed

- Word Search Puzzle
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Table
- Chair

Why do it?

Word search puzzles are an excellent way to target working memory, word recognition, concentration and attention, and can also provide a sense of accomplishment when the puzzle is completed successfully.



Steps

1. Choose a word search for your loved one to complete.
 - Word search puzzles are typically themed and vary in difficulty. Choose one that matches your loved one's abilities and interest.
2. Sit your loved one in a sturdy chair to complete the puzzle.

4

WORD SEARCH

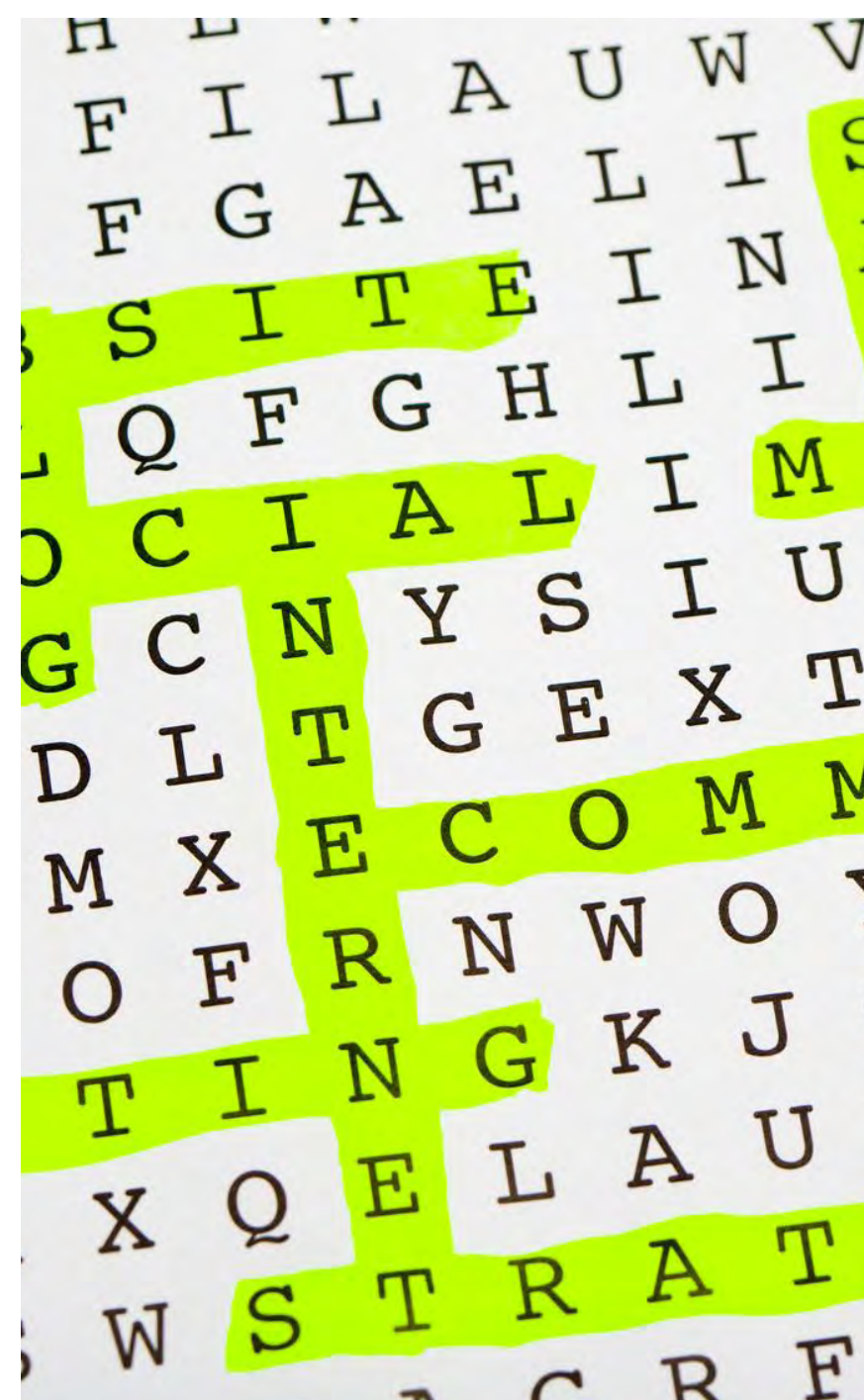


Adjust Difficulty

Cognitive

- Large word search grid
- More words to find
- Smaller word length
- Variety of orientation of words to find (i.e. diagonal, backwards)
- Complete independently

- Smaller word search grid
- Fewer words to find
- Longer word length
- Orientation of words only up-down and left-right
- Complete with total assistance



Word search puzzles can be played both online and on paper. Many websites provide free access to online puzzles, and apps exist for the more tech-savy individuals who may want to play on the go. Word search puzzle books can be purchased from local book stores, grocery stores, dollar stores and many box stores including Walmart.

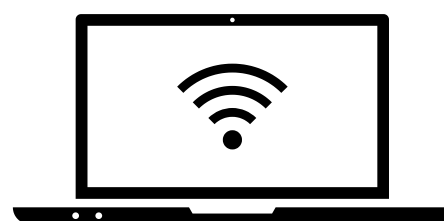


Notes
Large print puzzle books are available for those with visual impairments.



5

SUDOKU



Materials Needed

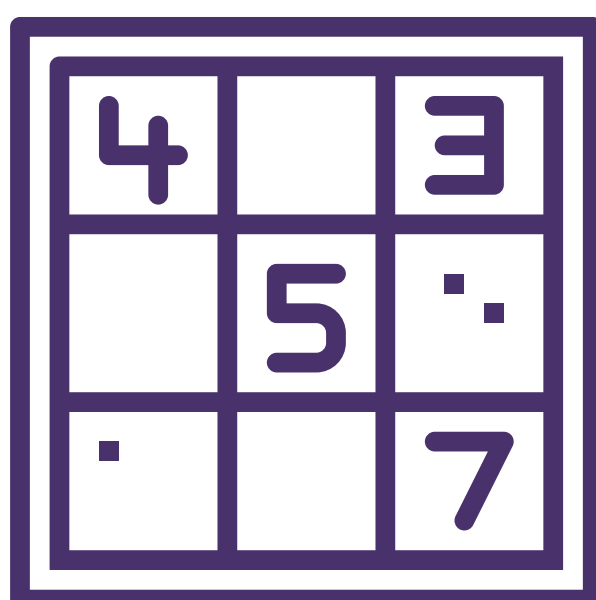
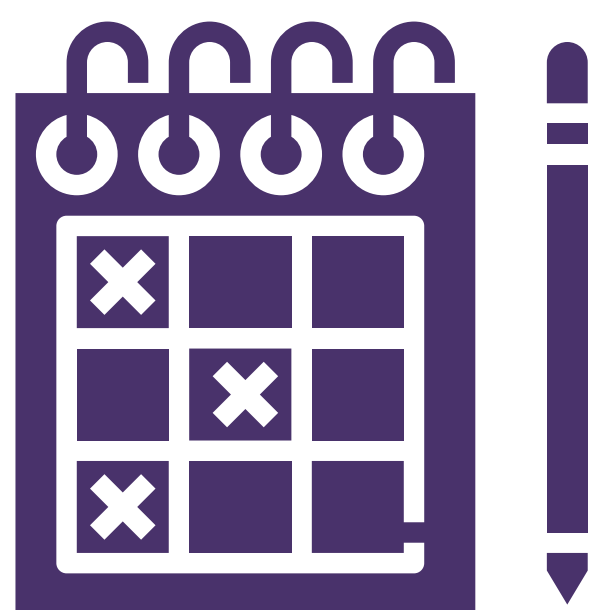
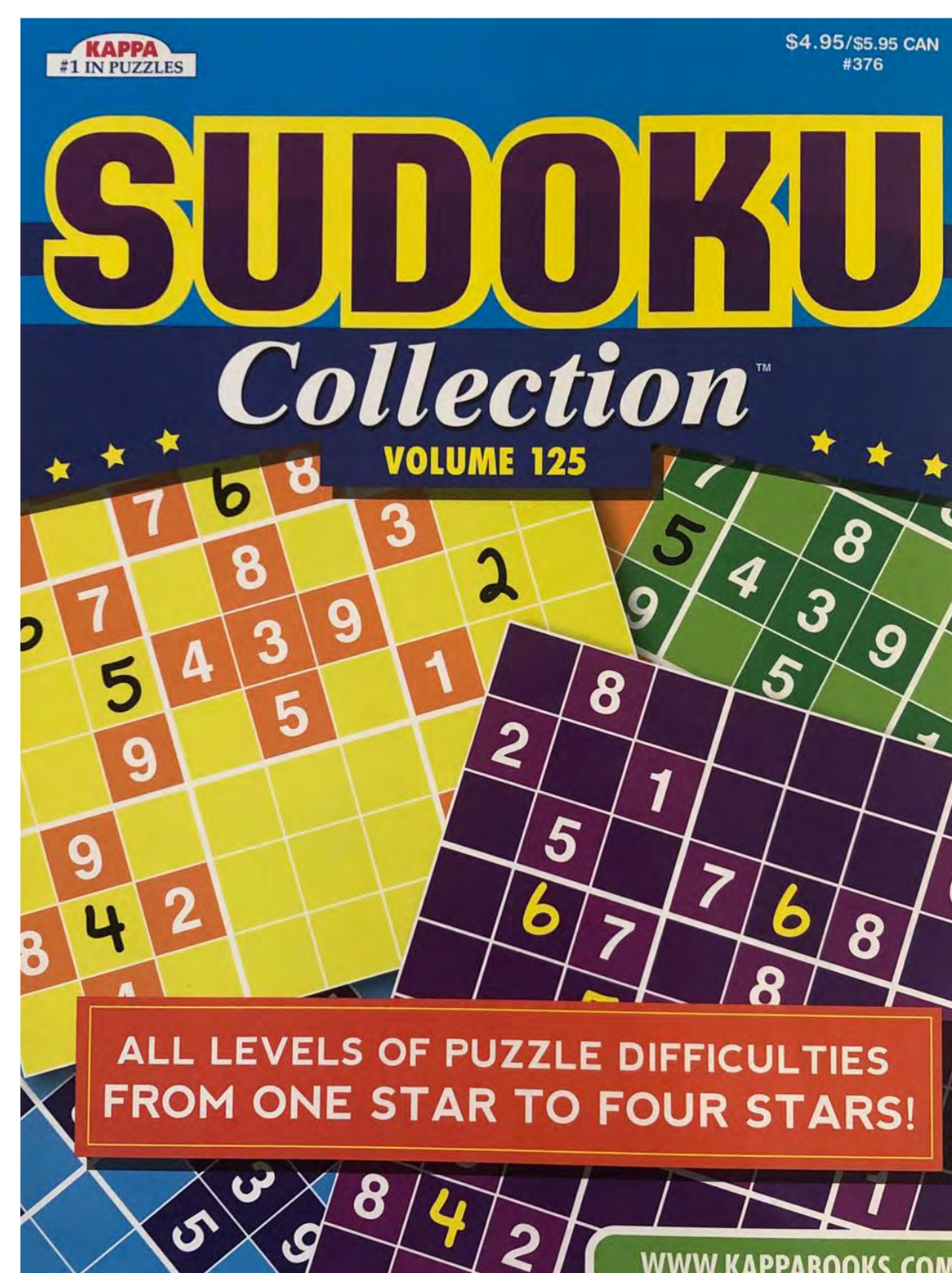
- Sudoku Puzzle
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Table
- Chair

Why do it?

Sudoku is a number puzzle game with the objective of filling in a 9x9 grid with the numbers 1-9 without repeating numbers within the same row, column, or 3x3 grid. It is an excellent way to target logic skills, working memory, concentration and attention and can also provide a sense of accomplishment when the puzzle is completed successfully.

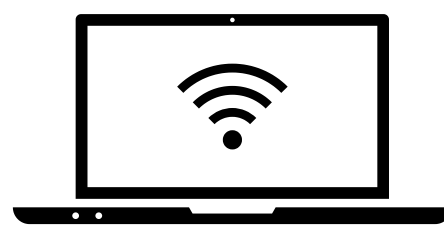
Steps

1. Choose a sudoku puzzle for your loved one to complete.
 - Sudoku puzzles vary in difficulty. Choose one at an appropriate level for your loved one's abilities.
2. Sit your loved one in a sturdy chair to complete the puzzle.



5

SUDOKU



Adjust Difficulty



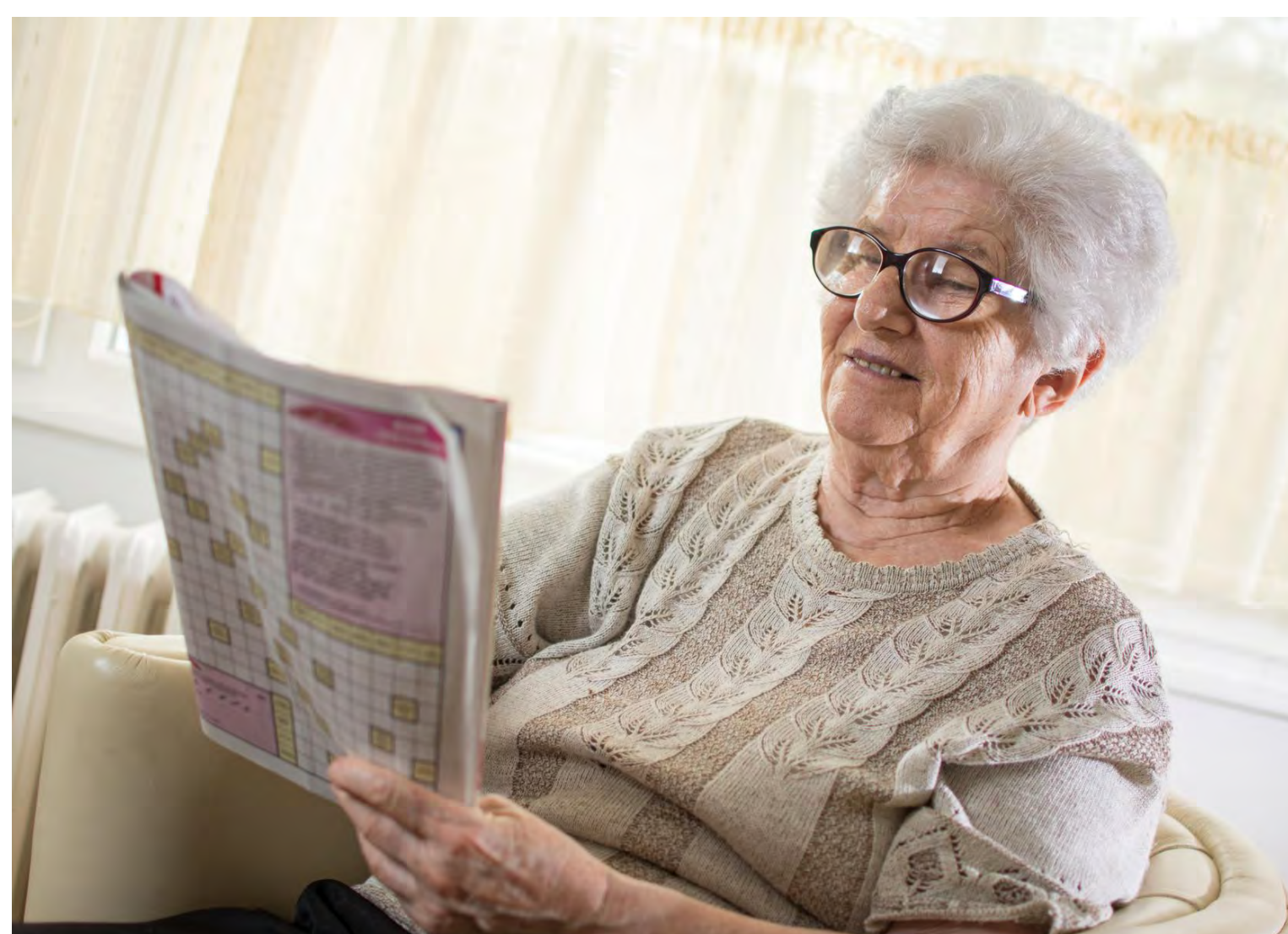
Cognitive



- Harder puzzle
- Try to beat the clock – time yourself and try to complete the puzzle as quickly as you can
- No assistance with puzzle
- Choose a variation on the classic Sudoku puzzle

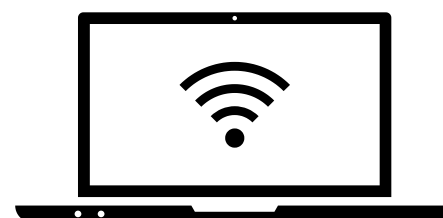
- Easier puzzle
- Play online using puzzles that indicate when the numbers inputted are correct or incorrect
- Complete collaboratively with a peer

Sudoku puzzles can be played both online and on paper. Many websites provide [free access to online puzzles](#), and apps exist for the more tech-savvy individuals who may want to play on the go. Word search puzzle books can be purchased from local book stores, grocery stores, dollar stores and many box stores including [Walmart](#).



6

JIGSAW PUZZLE

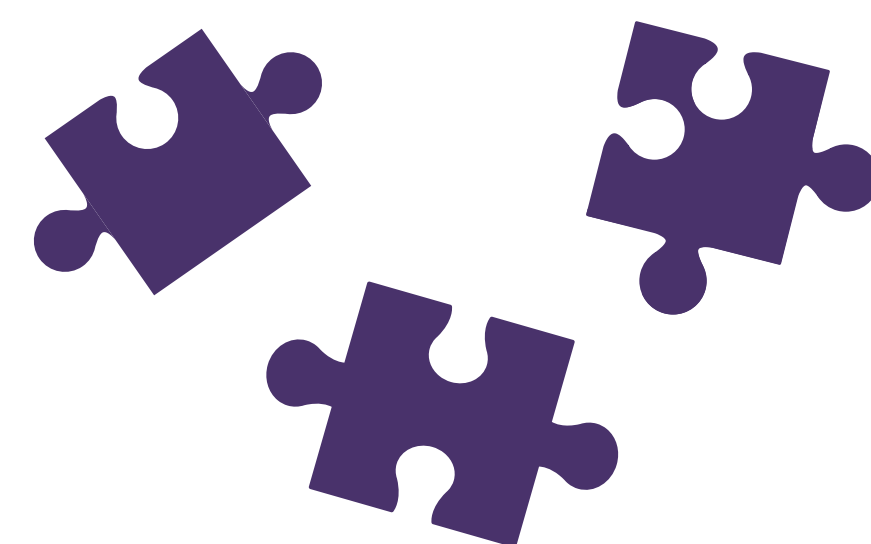


Why do it?

Putting together jigsaw puzzles is an excellent way to stimulate your loved one's creativity. They also target their visuospatial awareness, memory, concentration and attention, and even work on their dexterity and fine motor skills. In addition, a sense of accomplishment is felt when looking at your beautiful finished product.

Materials Needed

- Jigsaw puzzle
- Table or other flat surface



Steps

1. Choose a jigsaw puzzle, keeping in mind your loved one's interests and ability level.
 - Keep in mind that jigsaw puzzles can vary in difficulty both by picture and number of pieces.
2. Begin putting the puzzle together by finding pieces that go together and interlocking them.



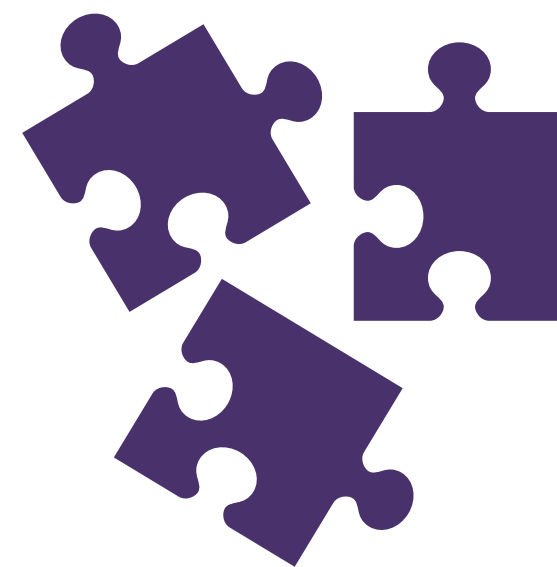
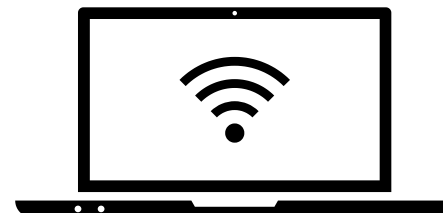
Safety



Jigsaw puzzle pieces are a choking hazard. Please use supervision if pieces are at risk of being ingested.

6

JIGSAW PUZZLE



↑ Adjust Difficulty ↓

Cognitive

- Puzzle with more, smaller pieces
- Complex image to recreate
- Puzzle with oddly cut pieces and outline
- 3D, or double sided puzzles
- Less colour contrast within puzzle image

- Puzzle with fewer, larger pieces
- Simple image to recreate
- Sort pieces by shape, colour and type prior to beginning
- High colour contrast within puzzle image

Puzzles can be completed both in person and online. Websites exist which allow users to complete a daily puzzle or choose one from their library. Jigsaw puzzles can also be purchased in games stores, box stores such as Walmart or online via websites such as Amazon.



Safety

Jigsaw puzzle pieces are a choking hazard. Please use supervision if pieces are at risk of being ingested.



Notes

Jigsaw puzzles can be personalized. Recreate a familiar landscape, a print of a favourite famous artist, or even create your own personalized jigsaw puzzle using your own photos!

