

## 101 Things to Do When Visiting a Relative or Friend

*The following list offers a wide variety of suggestions or possibilities which may or may not be of interest to your relative, and some of which are very simple and obvious. Sometimes when a person is very physically unwell or has advanced dementia, it can be hard to find things which can engage the person's interest. However, it is hoped that there might be something new in this list which would be worth trying. Remember it may not work one day but it might on another.*

1. Talk about what you have been doing since your last visit
2. Bring photos of family & friends - from days gone by or recent snaps
3. Create a photo album, frame photos or make a photo collage
4. Create a 'Talking' photo album with buttons to record and then press which explain the photograph - purchasable online
5. Make a special scrapbook or a memory box of significant objects based on personal life history
6. Help write or record an autobiography
7. Share favourite stories and memories
8. Bring holiday snaps, souvenirs, postcards, even maps and tales of your journey
9. Read newspapers & magazines aloud to keep your relative in touch
10. Jointly look at magazines with large colourful pictures and invite opinions and comments on the contents whether it is fashion preferences or political views
11. Subscribe to a relative's hometown newspaper and bring it along
12. Read religious (where appropriate) or inspirational articles, magazines or books – a 'thought for the day' or 'hope for the week'
13. Read letters from family and friends
14. Bring recorded greetings from family & friends
15. Help with writing letters & cards
16. Find a pen pal and help with the project
17. Create a collage poster with pictures and words cut from magazines
18. Bring articles related to the season or next holiday to talk about
19. Have an indoor picnic whilst visiting
20. Enjoy a favourite drink or food that you have brought
21. If you play an instrument offer to do a private concert
22. Try teaching simple tunes on an instrument
23. Sing or hum together
24. Play 'name that tune' with CDs, YouTube or music on the radio
25. Create a favourite playlist and listen to music together
26. Play simple charades – e.g. miming an action to guess what it is
27. Wind wool together for a knitting project
28. Try drawing or painting together – use the many adult colouring books
29. Make simple gifts for the grandchildren
30. Bring along your sewing basket, button box, socks drawer or toolbox to organize together – sort in sizes and colours
31. Bring a bird feeder or house to hang outside
32. Bring a book on bird watching
33. Bring the mending to do while you visit – watching is an activity too!

34. Brush, comb or style relative's hair – give a simple head massage at the same time
35. Offer a pamper with make-up, perfume, aftershave or manicure
36. Ask your relative for help planning your garden and look through a seed catalogue
37. Plant and look after an indoor windowsill garden
38. Create a terrarium (tabletop garden arrangement) together
39. Play word games and trivia together
40. Play cards or table board games together
41. Do crosswords together or do yours out loud – listening is an activity too.
42. Do jigsaws together even if the person can only watch or pick up the pieces
43. Watch television together and discuss the programme you have seen
44. Keep up with the Soaps that your relative watches and discuss
45. Rent a DVD of an old favourite movie or musical and watch it together
46. Hold your own tournament or competition and keep a running tally of the scores. Think about bowling, bean bag toss, quizzes, Nintendo Wi etc.
47. Create a story from a picture e.g. looking at a photograph or piece of art and imagining what is happening; who the people are, what they are doing or thinking etc.
48. Have a session of 'retail therapy' and do some shopping from catalogues
49. When possible take your relative shopping if only to 'window shop' or bring your latest grocery shop in bags to unpack onto a table together and talk about all the items in the bag
50. Bring recipes to cook with your relative or to talk about and share favourites
51. Bring along a treat you know your relative likes
52. Go for a walk 'round the block' inside or outside the building – take time to stop and look at the view, talk to people along the way and point out anything new or interesting
53. Give a gentle hand massage using aromatherapy scented oils or hand cream
54. Bring items to stimulate the sense of smell- spices, perfume or flowers
55. Bring different textured fabrics to touch- silk, cashmere, velvet etc:
56. Show film footage of a recent holiday
57. Bring home movies made with a camcorder or your phone
58. Use YouTube or the internet to play favourite film clips, comedy sketches, musicians or amusing clips of children, animals etc.
59. Bring grandchildren's artwork or school papers
60. Bring a pet to visit
61. Bring a pet which can stay- fish?!
62. Start a collection or hobby that you both enjoy
63. Invite other residents who share the same hobby to join in
64. Do simple exercises together – use music and actions like "Play the violin, put the washing on the line." to make them fun
65. Read a chapter of a novel, a short story or a few poems
66. Write poetry or a short story together
67. Look at and listen to an old-fashioned music box
68. Make a "joy box"(decorated shoe box) filled with fun and favourite things
69. Discuss seasonal changes looking out of the window
70. Keep a "window diary" of interesting things that happen outside
71. Keep a journal of interesting discussions and upcoming events
72. Make a pot pourri together and hang it up

73. Tell jokes to one another, bring along a joke book to keep it going
74. Help with writing letters to family and friends
75. Surprise your relative and bring along one of their friends for a visit
76. Take photos to send to friends and family
77. Take a walk together, weather permitting, or just sit round the block inside
78. Bring grandchildren and enjoy watching them play
79. Bring a small baby or child for a visit
80. Help the person make items for charity
81. Celebrate holidays or festivals in the home or outside when possible
82. Keep a track of favourite sports events or teams
83. Learn a new word or words whenever you visit using a dictionary
84. Challenge each other to a spelling contest or mathematics problem
85. Play along with TV game shows or develop your own
86. Dance, or tap your feet, to your relative's favourite dance music
87. Bring a travel book or brochure & dream about a fantasy holiday
88. Use small rhythm instruments to make your own music
89. Read your star sign forecasts in a daily paper and talk about it
90. Play noughts and crosses or similar games
91. Talk about local landmarks and how the community has changed – use 'Google Maps' or similar to seek out places of interest
92. Make lists of your relative or friend's favourite foods, films, movie stars, music etc;
93. Talk about what you would do if you won the lottery
94. Design and make your own Christmas and holiday cards to send
95. Toss cards or other items into a hat or a box
96. Hold your relative's hand and be a good listener – sometimes less is more
97. Try your hand at drawing each other portraits when possible
98. With closed eyes see if your relative can guess different flavours you supply
99. Talk about, recite or play nursery rhymes and songs from childhood
100. Give hugs and affection when arriving and leaving
101. Other ideas you may have?

With thanks to NAPA, National Activity Providers Association in the UK for permission to use this resource.