

20 Dementia-Friendly Craft Activities for Seniors

Simple, sensory, seasonal, group, and individual craft ideas families can use to create calm, connection, and meaningful moments.

Created by Arcadia Senior Living Louisville

Memory Care | Assisted Living | Independent Living | Respite Care

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Tip: Focus on the experience, not the finished craft. Offer choices, keep steps short, and celebrate participation.

How to Use This Guide

These activities are designed for family caregivers, activity teams, and loved ones who want simple, dementia-friendly craft ideas that are easy to set up and adjust. Choose projects based on the person's interests, comfort level, and current abilities.

Keep it safe and supportive

Use non-toxic supplies, avoid small choking hazards when appropriate, supervise scissors or sharp tools, and choose washable materials. If a person becomes tired, frustrated, or overstimulated, pause and return later.

Sensory Crafts Use texture, color, scent, and gentle repetition to support engagement.	Seasonal Crafts Connect projects to familiar holidays, weather, and family traditions.
Group Crafts Encourage conversation, cooperation, and shared accomplishment.	Individual Crafts Offer calm, personalized activities that can be adapted one-on-one.

Sensory Craft Activities

1. Textured Fabric Collage

Materials: Fabric squares, felt, ribbon, cardstock, glue stick

How to do it: Invite the person to choose textures, arrange them on cardstock, and press each piece into place. Ask gentle questions like, "Which one feels softest?"

2. Scented Herb Sachets

Materials: Small cloth bags, dried lavender or mint, ribbon

How to do it: Fill small bags with familiar scents and tie them closed. This can be calming and may invite memories of gardens, kitchens, or favorite places.

3. Sponge Painting

Materials: Large paper, washable paint, sponge pieces

How to do it: Dip sponges into paint and press simple shapes onto paper. Use only two or three colors to keep the activity easy to follow.

4. Yarn-Wrapped Cardboard Shapes

Materials: Cardboard hearts, circles, or stars, chunky yarn

How to do it: Wrap yarn around a large pre-cut shape. The soft texture and repetitive movement can feel soothing.

5. Nature Touch Board

Materials: Leaves, smooth stones, faux flowers, cardstock, glue

How to do it: Create a board with safe natural textures. Use items that are large enough to handle comfortably.

Seasonal Craft Activities

6. Spring Flower Collage

Materials: Pre-cut flower shapes, green paper stems, glue stick

How to do it: Arrange flowers into a simple bouquet. Talk about favorite flowers or gardens.

7. Patriotic Paper Chain

Materials: Red, white, and blue paper strips, glue dots

How to do it: Loop paper strips together to make a chain. This works well as a group craft for familiar summer celebrations.

8. Fall Leaf Rubbings

Materials: Leaves, crayons, white paper

How to do it: Place leaves under paper and rub with large crayons. Choose high-contrast colors so the shapes are easy to see.

9. Holiday Memory Ornament

Materials: Clear plastic ornament, ribbon, small photo copy, paper strips

How to do it: Add ribbon or a copy of a family photo to a clear ornament. Avoid glass ornaments for safety.

10. Winter Snowflake Art

Materials: Pre-cut snowflakes, blue paper, glue stick

How to do it: Arrange snowflakes on a background. Keep patterns simple and encourage choice of placement.

Group Craft Activities

11. Shared Community Mural

Materials: Large poster board, markers, stickers, pre-cut shapes

How to do it: Each person adds one piece to a shared mural. This creates belonging without requiring complex steps.

12. Family Photo Memory Board

Materials: Printed photo copies, labels, glue stick, board

How to do it: Add photos and short labels. Let the person point, choose, or share a memory if they want to.

13. Music and Painting Session

Materials: Washable paint, large paper, familiar music

How to do it: Play favorite music while participants paint freely. Keep the focus on mood, rhythm, and enjoyment.

14. Thank-You Card Station

Materials: Blank cards, stickers, stamps, markers

How to do it: Make simple cards for family, staff, or neighbors. Offer sample phrases for those who want help with words.

15. Collaborative Quilt Paper Squares

Materials: Square paper pieces, markers, glue, poster board

How to do it: Each person decorates one square, then the group combines them into a paper quilt.

Individual Craft Activities

16. Coloring With Bold Outlines

Materials: Large-print coloring pages, thick crayons or markers

How to do it: Choose simple images with bold outlines. Offer a limited color choice to reduce decision fatigue.

17. Memory Book Page

Materials: Photo copy, cardstock, stickers, short label

How to do it: Create one page at a time using a favorite photo or theme. Keep text short and easy to read.

18. Pom-Pom Sorting and Art

Materials: Large pom-poms, bowls, glue, paper

How to do it: Sort pom-poms by color, then glue them into a simple shape. This can be adapted as sorting only if gluing is too much.

19. Painted Garden Stones

Materials: Smooth stones, washable or acrylic paint, sealant optional

How to do it: Paint simple dots, lines, or hearts on large stones. Use them for a garden, porch, or windowsill display.

20. Simple Bead Garland

Materials: Large beads, thick cord, tape on cord end

How to do it: String large beads onto a thick cord. Supervise closely and avoid small beads when choking risk is a concern.

Simple Adaptation Checklist

- Use pre-cut shapes when scissors may be frustrating or unsafe.
- Offer two choices instead of a full table of supplies.
- Use large, easy-grip tools such as chunky crayons or sponge brushes.
- Keep sessions short, usually 15 to 30 minutes depending on energy and interest.
- Give step-by-step prompts, then allow quiet time to create.
- Praise the process: choosing, touching, arranging, sharing, or trying.
- Invite conversation, but do not pressure the person to remember or explain.
- Adjust lighting, noise, seating, and table height for comfort.

Learn how creativity fits into memory care at Arcadia Senior Living Louisville.
Our memory care programming is designed to support familiar routines, meaningful engagement, and compassionate daily support in a warm Louisville community.

Call 502-244-4244 or visit Arcadia Senior Living Louisville to schedule a tour and learn more about memory care, assisted living, independent living, and respite care.

This guide is for educational and activity-planning purposes only. It is not medical advice. Always adapt activities to the person's abilities, comfort, and safety needs.