



## **Busy Blanket**

The enclosed Busy Blanket is brought to you in a partnership between SRB (Senior Resources of Broomfield) and our creative volunteers. It is our hope that this blanket filled with sensory items will help you or your loved one stay calm and lower their anxiety while in the hospital. This blanket is available for a minimal donation of \$40.00.

### **Why do you think a busy blanket is needed for me or my loved one?**

Some older adults may show anxiety or agitation through fidgety hands. Signs include pulling or rubbing at clothes or bedding, rubbing hands together, twisting fingers, wringing hands, and generally keeping hands in motion. Sensory therapy or fidget toys are an effective way to reduce anxiety, calm nerves, and provide comfort. These are simple touch-based activities that help someone with Dementia or Alzheimer's keep hands busy in a safe and soothing way.

No matter what the activity or toy, just remember that the goal is to engage your older adult in something fun and keep their hands occupied. There is no right or wrong way to do it and no specific goal to achieve – whatever feels good to them is perfect.

There are other things you can do to help ease their busy hands.

- If your loved one used to knit or crochet, consider getting some large gauge needles or hooks and brightly colored yarn. They may still enjoy the soothing, repetitive activity even if they are only able to make snarled or oddly shaped items.
- Sensory toys in bright colors and textures.



- Help with household chores like:
  - FOLD laundry – Colorful hand towels work perfectly
  - SMOOTH colorful crumpled tissue paper
  - ORGANIZE paperwork, choose unimportant papers, and ask for help organizing them.
  - PLAY with paperclips – string large paperclips together or sort large and small ones.
  - SHUFFLE and arrange a large print deck of cards – let them do whatever they wish with the cards, use nice and bright looking cards for added visual stimulation
- Memory or Fidget box or basket – Just keep in mind that all the items should be safe to handle. Use items that mean something to your family member. If they enjoyed handy work; put nuts, bolts, pvc pipe pieces and fittings, a soft piece of wood, fine grit sandpaper, and twine in their box. If they were a cook or baker, they might enjoy measuring spoons, whisk, spatula, or other items used in the kitchen. This list can include items from their career, hobby or non-important photos and keepsakes. Pull out the box when your loved one needs something to do and throw everything back into the box when they are done. Here are some items to consider:
  - Things with zippers or Velcro closures
  - Little toys that wind up
  - Stress balls for squeezing
  - Brightly colored plastic springs like a Slinky
  - Mini stuffed animals
  - Row of buttons sewn firmly onto a ribbon
  - A piece of soft fleece or faux fur
  - Old keys on a keyring
  - Pictures of loved ones each with names printed on them and dates. It might help them remember and bring back wonderful memories.



- **KEEP FAMILIAR ITEMS AT HAND**

Some older adults are comforted by keeping a familiar item with them, like a purse or wallet. Fill an old purse or wallet with a few dollars, coins, play money, or faux credit cards so they can rummage whenever they like.

- **UNTIE KNOTS**

Find or buy a length of medium-thick rope and loosely tie a few simple knots and ask them to help you untie them.

- **THREAD PASTA WITH YARN OR STRING**

Get some dry pasta with big holes and some thick yarn or string. Tape around the end of the yarn or string making a “Needle”. Have your loved one string the pasta using their needle and thread.

- **CREATE A BOX OF FUN FABRICS**

Try to use different pieces of assorted fabrics in bright colors and textures like felt, silk, lace, wool, cotton, velvet, etc. They can enjoy touching, folding, and sorting the fabrics.

- **MAKE A DIY PICTURE PUZZLE**

Print a copy of a favorite family photo or scenery that is special to your family member. You can also print out a photo or image they like, such as a car, garden, colorful fruit, etc. Laminate the photo and cut it into four or more puzzle-piece shaped pieces.

We hope that you and/or your loved one will enjoy the Busy Blanket.

For more Caregiver ideas look at [DailyCaring.com](http://DailyCaring.com)

“Tips and Help for Caregivers.” *DailyCaring*, [dailycaring.com/](http://dailycaring.com/).