

# Make your own Touch Quilt for someone living with dementia

## How to Make Touch Quilts

When making a touch quilt think about the needs of Alzheimer's patients and how the quilt will be used. In residences, the quilts are used in several ways.

Smaller quilts, 24" to 30" square [60 to 90 cm], are put in the lap of someone living with dementia and encouraging them to move and explore with their fingers.



Quilts are also left around or hung on walls where people just pick them up or go to feel them. A person living with dementia who is especially upset may be gradually distracted by a quilt put in their lap. Therefore make sure your quilt has lots of excitement for fingers and senses!

## Assembling the Quilt

1. When laying out the blocks to make the quilt, think about the patterns of texture. You may, for example, alternate smoother squares with rough (as you might light and dark colors). Or do you want a progression of smooth to rough, soft to harsh around the quilt?

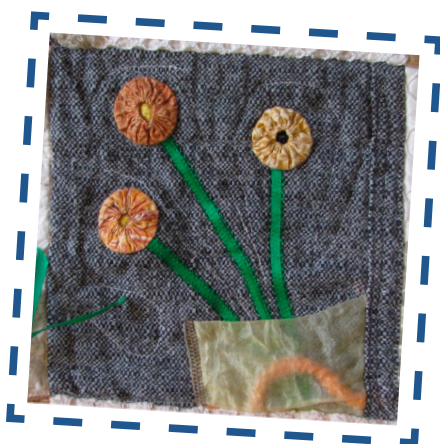
When you have arranged squares, close your eyes and feel how they go together.



2. After you have a design of texture, look at the colors. Is the quilt too bland? too jarring?

If you want to change a fabric because of color, look for a similar texture in another color. If you feel your quilt is too dull, you might want to add embellishments. Add color by using more bright fabric or add a couple of small toys or noise makers, such as bells.

Do not over embellish. A too-busy quilt detracts from the calming effect.



3. For thread, use the strongest you have. As these quilts may be treated roughly and washed in commercial washing machines, they need to be as strong as possible.

As this is more challenging to assemble, you may want to create rows of different size rectangles to simplify the sewing. Cut your blocks and sew them together on any base fabric you have chosen.

4. After sewing is complete, press the entire quilt top flat and trim outside edges to make top square and edges even.





## Quilting Tips:

**Creative tips:** Quilts should have at least 10 different textures: smooth, rough, raised stripes or circles, nap, plush, pile or shag, satiny, burlap-like, homespun, lacy, tweedy, or even terry cloth!

Try to use some fake fur or sew pockets in each quilt. Zippers and hanging tassels are fun to play with.



**Safety:** Avoid placing metal objects like metal zippers on your quilts.

Make it strong and safe, so nothing will come off and so it will stand up to harsh washing. Ensure all objects are secured as to avoid hazards like choking.



## Colour:

People living with Dementia appreciate attractive, brightly coloured quilts in the primary colors - red, blue, and green. As our sight dims bright colors, contrasting edges, and larger patterns help.

Red is a good choice for people who are losing their eye sight. Therefore it is recommended that every quilt should include red.

Patients with Alzheimer's disease may see the colour black as a hole in the quilt. Therefore use black sparingly, as no more than a bit of trim. Quilts destined for care facilities where yellow is used to indicate no-go zones should have little or no yellow.