Occupational Therapy Australia



Occupational therapy and dementia

Dementia can present differently from person to person, and for some individuals, from day to day. Taking a person-centred approach, occupational therapists understand the different types of dementia and the disease progression, including younger onset dementia, and how these changes of the brain impact a person's functioning.

Occupational therapists work with people across all stages of dementia to help reduce and manage the impact symptoms have on daily life. Early intervention is key to maintaining function and independence for as long as possible and to maximise quality of life.

With this knowledge, occupational therapists design strategies that focus on a persons goals, abilities and motivations and emphasise cognitive rehabilitation and restorative approaches addressing areas like activities of daily living, work or home environments, functional mobility, social engagement, driving, changes to behaviour and carer responsibilities.

Strategies might include:

- activity retraining to highlight a person's abilities and mitigate any risks,
- training a carer so they can support someone living with dementia to safely undertake certain tasks,
- assessment and prescription of aids, equipment and environmental changes to enhance participation in important and purposeful activities,
- falls and balance prevention strategies such as home hazard assessments or exercises,
- addressing physical or cognitive barriers to continued participation in social activities and community engagement or exploring new opportunities for socialising,
- training, education, advocacy and linkages to specialist services for those caring for someone living with dementia to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

To access an occupational therapist:
Contact My Aged Care **1800 200 422**
Speak to your GP to obtain a referral under Medicare or DVA

To find out more about occupational therapy and to find an OT working with older people near you, visit otaus.com.au/find-an-ot

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