



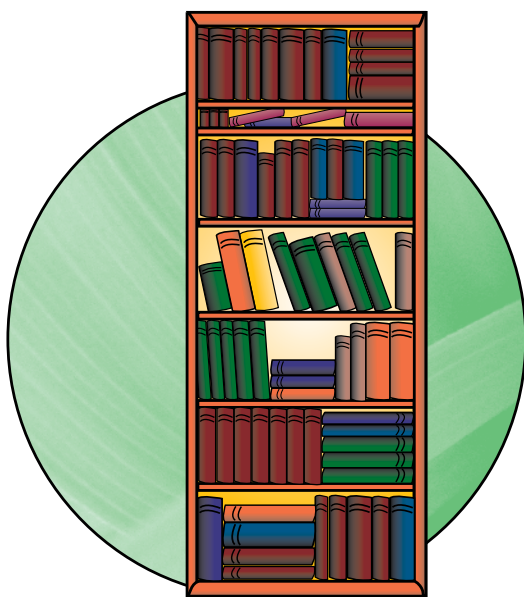
# Front Entrance

## Help Sheet 3.4

### *Living with dementia - how the environment, technology and you can help*

This help sheet provides ideas on how changes in the environment and some items of assistive technology may be used at the front entrance of the home to support the independence, safety and security of a person living with dementia.

Remembering to lock doors and windows, being able to judge a dangerous situation and calling for help if needed are all important skills for maintaining both personal and home security. These skills can be compromised because of changes in memory associated with dementia. People living at home with dementia can be vulnerable to financial exploitation and risks to their well being.



*Door Murals are used to reduce the 'visibility' or disguise a door to deter a person from leaving through that door*

#### Person Centred Response

A person living with dementia will experience changes in their ability to interact with other people and their environment over time. When considering changes or technology in the home it is important to consider that simple strategies can often work just as well as more complex technology.

It is critical that any decision to change the environment or use technology follows a person-centred assessment, where the perspectives, needs and choices of the person with dementia are understood and respected.

What works for some people does not always work for others. It is important to continue to provide ongoing evaluation to ensure that any technology or strategies used for supporting independence and safety in the home, remains meaningful to the person and match their needs and abilities.

#### Environmental Suggestions

- **Mail** – an adhesive sign or label attached to the letterbox which states 'No Junk Mail' can reduce the amount of printed matter and junk mail posted in the letterbox each day. In addition to minimizing confusion from large amounts of unsolicited mail, mail is less likely to protrude from the letterbox, improving security.
- Consider **removing any large bushes** or shrubbery that block the view of the home from the street. This will remove hiding places and allow neighbours a clearer view of the home.
- A **Pathway** from the front gate to the front entrance which is flat, even and with a surface that is slip resistant can make it easier to collect mail, visit friends and receive visitors.
- A **Hand Rail** installed at the front steps to provide support with climbing and descending the stairs, or a white balustrade installed around the perimeter of the verandah, can provide both support and safety if correctly installed at the right height. An occupational therapist who works in community health or in private practice, or a licensed building service which specialises in installing ramps and hand rails, can assist.

- A **Security Screen Door** at the front entrance allows for the front door to remain open for ventilation but prevents someone from just walking in through the open front door.

## Simple Technology Suggestions

- **Door Murals** – if you want to reduce the ‘visibility’ of the front doorway, hanging a curtain or placing a full sized photographic mural across the door can reduce the visibility of the doorway or even create the illusion of a wall. Door sized murals are available from specialty shops and online shopping.
- A **Security Door Chain** with a key lock can be fitted on either the front or back door. If emergency access is required, entry can be gained using the key even when the chain is fitted in the lock position. The security door chain represents a familiar item to those who have used security chains previously. Most large hardware stores have this product.
- The **‘Doorganiser’** is designed to hang from the front door handle. It has open pockets and a clip to hold easily forgotten items like glasses, keys, mobile phones or envelopes.
- The **Sensor Light Adaptor** by Beon has an infrared sensor to detect movement and switch on the light. The adaptor is designed to plug straight into a light socket or lamp fitting. This adaptor is useful to light up the front of your home for visitors or unexpected callers. When choosing the wattage of the bulb, please keep in mind that sudden changes in light levels from dark to very bright light can take a number of minutes to adjust to and if too bright can be a falls hazard.

## Advanced Technology Suggestions

- The **Infrared Voice Alert Door Entry System** speaks a pre-recorded message when someone walks through the beam. This unit can record up to six separate short messages and is useful for pre-recording a reminder message such as ‘remember your keys’ for when you leave the house. It may also be used by a family member to play a message that reminds the person if they get up during the night ‘dad it is still night time, please go back to bed’.
- A **Video Intercom System** which allows the home resident to view callers at their front door. This can be useful if it is not practical for the resident to answer the door due to decreased mobility or distance. The resident can view the visitor’s picture via a television screen or on the telephone handset; they can then allow or deny entry to the visitor by pressing a button on the telephone handset or using a remote control device.
- An **Emergency Call Assistance Button** (or bogus caller button) is located inside the home usually beside the front door. It is designed to be used if there is an unwanted caller to the home. When pressed it communicates via the telephone line to a call centre using a silent mode. The call centre will then follow a predetermined plan to notify either a family member or emergency services. If the button has been pressed in error, the alert can be cancelled using the handset in the home.



## Finding Products

For information about specific products and where to get them, see [www.dementiatechnology.org.au](http://www.dementiatechnology.org.au) Professional assessment is advised before any changes are made or products purchased. To find the best solution for your needs and to avoid unnecessary expense, contact the Independent Living Centre.

## Further Information

Technology and the way individuals relate to it are constantly changing. For further information, a dementia friendly home checklist and to view other Help Sheets about how the environment, technology and you can help, please see [www.dementiatechnology.org.au](http://www.dementiatechnology.org.au) or call 1300 275 227 (1300 ASK BCS).

For further information and to discuss your individual needs and:

- assistive technology or home modifications, contact the Independent Living Centre at [www.ilcaustralia.org](http://www.ilcaustralia.org) or 1300 885 886;
- dementia, contact The National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500, or Alzheimer’s Australia at [www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au).

For information about local care and support services, including respite for carers, phone Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres on freecall 1800 052 222\*. For emergency respite support outside business hours, phone freecall 1800 059 059\* (\*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates).