

Daily Sundowning Management Checklist

A practical daily guide for dementia caregivers to track and prevent late-day confusion.

Morning & Afternoon Prevention

- **Bright Light Exposure:** Open curtains or spend time near a window early to reset the internal clock.
- **Physical Movement:** Encourage light activity, stretching, or a walk during the morning hours.
- **Limit Nap Durations:** Keep daytime naps short and early to preserve nighttime sleepiness.
- **Main Meal at Lunch:** Serve the heaviest meal at midday and a lighter option for dinner.
- **Caffeine Cut-off:** Stop serving coffee, soda, or caffeinated tea strictly after 12:00 PM.

Late Afternoon Environmental Prep (Trigger Reduction)

- **Turn on Indoor Lighting:** Switch lights on before sunset to prevent confusing or scary shadows.
- **Close Window Blinds:** Draw curtains at dusk to block outdoor fading light and window reflections.
- **Minimize Noise & Distractions:** Turn off loud TVs, radios, or flashing devices to reduce sensory overload.
- **Clear Walking Pathways:** Remove rugs, clutter, and obstacles to ensure pacing remains safe.

Evening Routine & De-escalation Strategies

- **Pre-empt the Peak:** Begin a calm, familiar activity (music, photo albums) 30 minutes before usual behaviors start.
- **Check Basic Comfort Needs:** Screen for hidden pain, hunger, thirst, a full bladder, or temperature discomfort.
- **Maintain Calming Presence:** Speak in a slow, reassuring tone; keep body language relaxed.
- **Avoid Arguments/Corrections:** Validate feelings without debating facts; gently redirect to a reassuring topic.

Daily Care Notes & Observed Triggers

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional.