



## How to Make Sensory Blankets for Dementia Care

Sensory Mats or Fidget Blankets provide a soothing and stimulating activity for people living with dementia or recovering from strokes.

The size of your fidget blankets is up to you; the dimensions below make a lap mat as per the photo that can be tied at the waist or positioned on a table with velcro.

### What you need

- Volunteers and sewing machines. Not all volunteers need to know how to sew; they can decorate, cut fabric, and separate items for personalised mats.
- Decorations: Leftover wool, strings, buttons, zippers, buckles, bells, fabric in different textures, soft toys, squishy and squeaky items, key rings, beads, and more.
- Stiff stabilizer, fusible on both sides. – 1 piece 24 X 19 inches or 56 X 47 cm
- Fabric - 2 pieces (front and back) - 24 X 19 inches or 56 X 47 cm

### Assembly

- Lay first piece of fabric right side up on a table
- Lay second piece of fabric, right side down (on top of first fabric)
- Lay stabilizer on top of fabrics
- Sew around and leave one side open
- Turn fabric layers inside out
- Now you have the interfacing between the two layers of the mat fabric
- Finish mat's open side by folding inwards and sewing shut.
- Iron the mat well to allow the interface to fuse
- Sew all around the 4 sides of the mat once more to finish the base.

### Decorating

Use your imagination; anything interesting and safe is suitable. Decorations should be securely attached to fabric for safety reasons.

**For example:** Sew on a zipper, attach buttons, make a button hole for large buttons with button flaps, sew in a bunch of wool strands (about 7 inches/18cm - to be braided); attach belt and buckle, sew in a fluffy piece of fabric and leather, attach pom-poms, squish toys, and more. Attach soft

toys, sew in a little pocket, large colourful beads, key ring and attach it to mat.

## Variations

- Mats **may be personalized**, e.g. if the client was a hairdresser, attach things she would recognise and enjoy to touch.
- You may wish to make it into an apron by placing ribbons on the sides.

**Remember that people living with dementia must be supervised.**

