

# Caregiver Hacks

Gathered by: Lisa Mooney, LCSW

When caring for an HD loved one, it often seems like simple tasks can be a challenge. This document shares hacks, ideas and strategies other HD families have shared as ways to help them in their caregiver responsibilities. Please review the *Living with HD* section for additional information about adjustments in environment for added safety and independence.



Simplify your life...(or at least try!)

## Motion Technology

- Smart Home Technology to monitor when care providers not around. Can hook up camera's inside, outside and on doors to alert you (via phone) that someone is around your home.
  - This is helpful for those that are HIGH Fall risk and don't stay still.
- Wearable Trackers on body, clothes, shoes some even have GPS can be helpful if your HD loved one is still mobile or driving so you can locate them as needed.



Bubble pack medication – some pharmacies can put all the morning, evening, daily medications into a bubble pack that then the HD person can push open for all the medications.

Automatic Medication Dispensers – needs to be programmed, but then when medication is needed the correct medication and dose is dispensed. Some can be linked with phone as well for monitoring.

- Manual Medication Organizers

## Medication



## Getting Help

- Shared calendar, document or phone apps where family/friends CAN sign up and help.
  - You can put what you need: (Sitting with your loved one, grocery shopping, transportation, household chores, yard work, etc) and they can do it for you.
- Find ways to take things OFF you List....
  - Cleaning Service
  - Grocery/Household Items Delivery
  - Meal Delivery Service –you can get meals to prepare or meals already cooked so just heat and serve.





## Voice Assistance Technology

- Voice assistive devices, phone or video chat has proven to be beneficial in addressing social isolation, loneliness, and desire to maintain relationships.
  - Can be used to set reminders for your HD person on when to take medication or shower, when to eat lunch, when to exercise, or upcoming appointments, etc.
  - Voice Assistance have “drop in” features so you don’t have to call but can communicate with your HD loved one without them using phone.
  - Can be used to turn on/off t.v., electronics, music, phone, lights, door locks, appliances and thermostat.



## QUALITY OF LIFE

- Explore meaningful and enjoyable activities you can do together as family
  - Movie nights, watch family videos/photos together
  - some HD families have found that Train travel allows them enjoy travel with their HD person.
- Schedule an exercise routine this will help with physical and mental health. Even short 5 minute walk outdoors can be beneficial. Put it in the schedule so it has a better chance of getting done.
- Stretches/Deep breathing – during t.v. commercials, when in car on way to new location (quick ones can be found on internet)



## ? Where to find more information about Living with HD

Talk with your **HD care team or HDSA Social Worker** about your specific needs and recommendations.

**Internet Search: for other ideas...**

- *Smart Home Caregiving Technology,*
- *Caregiving Hacks*
- *Meditations/Deep Breathing*
- *Quick Stretches*
- *Stress Management*

**HDSA: [www.hdsa.org](http://www.hdsa.org)**

- HD Presentation @ 2018 National Convention discussing Smart Home Technology had some really good ideas from an HD Care Partner.

**HDSA Publications:**

- *Physical and Occupational Therapy – Family Guide Series*
- *Caregiver Guide for Mid to Late Stage Huntington’s Disease – recommend pages 34-69.*

**AARP**

<https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/>

Lots of tips, hacks, and recommendations for caregivers regarding home safety, self-care and utilizing technology.

**HD Support Groups** (Video or In-Person) others in similar situations share techniques, equipment and/or ideas that worked well for their family.