

How to Make an Alzheimer Touch Quilt

To make an Alzheimer Touch Quilt, you'll need 36, 6 inch squares of assorted textured fabrics. Some fabrics that would be suitable include seersucker, fake fur, velvet, fleece, satin, corduroy, wool and textured home decorator fabrics. Squares with pockets or zippers are also good. This size quilt fits nicely on the lap of a wheelchair-bound person. The 6 inch square is just right for an outstretched hand. Fabrics should be washable and durable enough to withstand the hot water washing typical of healthcare facilities as not all facilities have regular washers and dryers that these quilts can be washed in. Bright coloured fabrics make the quilt lively, but remember that the textures are the most important factor. From feedback we have received from the healthcare facilities, fur is the favourite fabric. They believe it reminds the person of a pet they may have had and stroking it brings comfort to them.

Join the squares in six rows of six squares or in four – nine patches, mixing them in a variety of texture and colour. Included in the kit is a six inch square label that replaces a fabric square. It can indicate who made the quilt and when. Any other information you know can also be put on the label, i.e. name of facility, name of the person receiving the quilt. It is a good idea

to use a stronger fabric around the edges. It helps keep the quilt square. If you are using lace, silk or silk like fabrics, you should use a stabilizing fabric with them. In the case of see through fabric, such as lace, a contrasting colour fabric works well. Sew the rows or nine patches together. Layer with a backing and batting and baste the layers together. Using a wide zig zag or serpentine stitch, quilt the squares in-the-ditch. Trim off excess batting and backing to the size of the quilt top. Bind the edges to finish. For additional warmth and comfort, it is recommended that flannel or fleece be used for the backing. If a good quality fleece is used for the backing, it is not necessary to use batting.



An alternative to binding the quilt is to layer the batting, the backing right side up, the quilt top right side down (*right sides together*). Sew the layers together around the perimeter with a $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch seam allowance, leaving approximately 6 – 8 inches unstitched. Trim off excess batting and backing to the size of the quilt top. Turn the quilt right side out through the opening and hand stitch the opening closed. Then quilt the squares in-the ditch using a wide zig zag or serpentine stitch.

Quilts can also be embellished with buttons securely sewn in place or ties that are hand or machine sewn. Recently, we gave a quilt to a woman whose husband is in a personal care home. For his whole life, this man worked with his hands. His wife had noticed that he was forever undoing the buttons on his shirt and undoing any tie that he could find. Before she was going to give the quilt to her husband, she was going to sew buttons and ties on it, so he would have something to do with his hands.

If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, please do not hesitate to call.

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