



Walking in Havering

A Guide for People Living with Dementia



Introduction

Walking is a simple yet powerful activity that promotes physical health, mental well-being, and a sense of community. For people living with dementia, walking can offer vital benefits such as improved cognitive function, mood enhancement, and a chance to connect with nature.

Havering, with its beautiful parks, green spaces, and accessible routes, offers a variety of options that are ideal for a relaxing and therapeutic walk.

This guide provides information on walking routes, tips for safe walking, and advice on how caregivers can support people with dementia to enjoy walks in Havering.



Why Walking is Important for People with Dementia

Living with dementia can sometimes lead to reduced mobility and social isolation. However, regular walks can:

- Improve mood and reduce anxiety: Being outdoors in nature can lift spirits and reduce stress.
- Boost physical health: Walking strengthens muscles, improves circulation, and can help with balance.
- Stimulate the brain: Engaging with changing surroundings, sights, sounds, and even smells helps stimulate cognitive function.
- Maintain a routine: Walking regularly can provide structure to daily activities, which can be comforting for people living with dementia.



Safety Considerations

When planning a walk for someone with dementia, safety is a top priority. Here are some essential tips:

1. **Plan Familiar Routes:** Choose familiar paths that the person may have walked before. This helps avoid confusion and keeps them more relaxed.
2. **Stay Close to Home:** In case of fatigue or disorientation, staying near home ensures you can easily return if needed.
3. **Walk in Groups:** Walking with a family member, friend, or caregiver is recommended for safety and social interaction.
4. **Wear Comfortable Clothing:** Ensure that the person wears appropriate footwear and clothing suitable for the weather.
5. **Bring Identification:** The person with dementia should carry a card or wearable ID with their name, address, and emergency contact.
6. **Take Regular Breaks:** Be mindful of rest stops to avoid overexertion.
7. **Be Aware of the Environment:** Avoid busy, noisy areas that might be overwhelming. Stick to quieter, peaceful routes.

Top Walking Routes in Havering

Havering offers a range of beautiful parks and accessible walking routes that cater to different needs and abilities. Here are some of the best options for people living with dementia:

Raphael Park



Location: Main Road, Romford, RM2 5EB

Features: Raphael Park is a large and well-maintained park with gentle slopes, wide walking paths, and beautiful lake views. There are benches along the way for rest breaks and a café for refreshments.

Why it's suitable: The park offers a peaceful atmosphere with plenty of shaded areas and calming scenery, perfect for a low-stress scenic walk.

Bedfords Park



Location: Broxhill Road, Havering-atte-Bower, RM4 1QH

Features: Bedfords Park is a large country park with a nature reserve, woodlands, and meadows. The park also has accessible pathways and lovely open spaces.

Why it's suitable: The abundance of nature, wildlife, and well-maintained walking paths make this an ideal spot for a leisurely and therapeutic stroll.

Harrow Lodge Park



Location: Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, RM11 1JU

Features: Harrow Lodge Park boasts wide open fields, a lake, and easy-to-navigate footpaths. The park is flat and perfect for shorter, more relaxed walks.

Why it's suitable: The open, expansive layout is visually comforting, reducing the chances of confusion, while the lake and swans offer a stimulating point of interest.

Hornchurch Country Park



Location: Squadrons Approach, Hornchurch, RM12 6DF

Features: Known for its tranquil riverside walks along the River Ingrebourne, Hornchurch Country Park is rich in history and natural beauty. There are also sculptures and a visitor center.

Why it's suitable: The easy terrain and calming environment provide an ideal setting for peaceful walks, while the historical elements can stimulate conversations and memories.

Upminster Park



Location: St Mary's Lane, Upminster, RM14 2QH

Features: A charming, smaller park with level pathways, seating areas, and floral displays. It's easily accessible and close to local amenities.

Why it's suitable: Upminster Park offers a quiet and comfortable environment for a short walk, making it perfect for those who may tire quickly or prefer a shorter route.

Supporting a Person with Dementia on Walks

Walking with someone who has dementia requires patience and understanding. Here are some tips for caregivers to ensure a positive experience:

- **Follow Their Pace:** It's important to walk at a speed that is comfortable for the person with dementia. Be prepared to slow down or take frequent breaks.
- **Keep Conversations Light:** Gentle conversations during the walk can help keep the person engaged and reduce feelings of anxiety or confusion. Talking about the surroundings (e.g., trees, birds, or flowers) can be a good way to stimulate positive interaction.
- **Watch for Signs of Fatigue:** Be mindful of signs of tiredness, such as slowing down or stopping frequently. Suggest a break or gently guide the person back home or to a nearby bench.
- **Respect Their Preferences:** Some people may enjoy walking alone for a few moments of peace, while others may need reassurance and close companionship. Respect their comfort level.
- **Use Visual Cues:** Landmarks, such as a large tree, fountain, or bench, can help the person with dementia orient themselves. Pointing out familiar features can provide a sense of security.
- **Be Flexible:** Some days may be better than others. If the person is feeling agitated or disoriented, it might be best to shorten or cancel the walk.

Incorporating Walking into a Routine

For people living with dementia, having a predictable routine can be very comforting. Walking can easily be built into daily or weekly schedules:

Same Time Every Day: Plan walks at the same time each day, whether in the morning or afternoon, so it becomes a familiar activity.

Post-Walk Reflection: After each walk, it can be helpful to reflect on the experience, even in a simple way. A cup of tea at home afterward or talking about what was seen on the walk can help create a sense of closure and relaxation.

Walking Clubs: There are several walking clubs in Havering where people with dementia and their carers can join others for social and group walks. This provides both exercise and a sense of community.

Useful Resources

If you're interested in walking groups or dementia-friendly services in Havering, here are some local organisations and resources that can help:

Tapestry Care UK Limited They provide high quality care and support services and activities from their HÜBs for people living with dementia in the borough, and guidance and support for Carers www.tapestry-uk.org

Havering Dementia Action Alliance: They organize events and provide support for people living with dementia in the borough. <https://www.havering.gov.uk>

Dementia Friendly Walking Groups: Check with your local library or community center to find walking groups that are dementia-friendly.

Alzheimer's Society: Offers support and information on dementia, including local services. Visit their website for more details:
www.alzheimers.org.uk](<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk>

Walking is a powerful and accessible activity that can enhance the well-being of people living with dementia.

In Havering, there are numerous parks and walking routes that provide the perfect backdrop for a calm and enjoyable stroll.

By taking appropriate safety measures and making walks a regular part of the day, both people with dementia and their caregivers can enjoy the many physical and emotional benefits of being outdoors.

So, take a step outside and enjoy what Havering has to offer—one peaceful walk at a time.





Our mission is always to work for the people of Havering.
It is set within our values to work collaboratively to bring together residents, businesses, voluntary organisations, funders and the public sector to address issues that matter to the whole community.

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