



Transform your living space into a peaceful and healing retreat with *positive energy*

Home should be a place that we love. It's where we feel comfortable, where we heal, and where we feel safe. Home truly is our refuge from the world. Since so much time is spent at home for many seniors, there are few settings where positive energy is more important. Home care often involves difficult situations, which can bring about sadness or depression. While it's important to respect that as a reality, it's also important to amplify positivity on every level possible.

There are several easy ways to bring positive energy into the home and help transform a living space into a more pleasing and peaceful retreat. Making a home brighter,

cleaner, and simply more upbeat can contribute to your overall health and well-being. Our environment dramatically affects our moods. We use our senses for everything, and when we see, hear, smell, and taste things we like, of course we feel good! Here are some easy, inexpensive ways to update your living space and invite more positive energy into your home:

Conquer your clutter!

This is perhaps the most important step in creating a more positive environment. Clutter produces physical and unconscious chaos. Having clutter and being disor-

ganized can lead to searching for an important document for hours. In short, clutter causes stress, and nothing diminishes our positive energy quite like stress. Clutter can also be dangerous if boxes or stacks of items are too close at foot. De-cluttering an area helps the space feel calm and more open, and most importantly, safer for you or your loved one as you walk throughout the home.

Let natural light in

This may sound like a simple step, but it can really have a big impact. Natural sunlight stimulates the production of vitamin D. Vitamin D elevates mood and makes people actually *feel happier*. Also, natural sunlight can help ease symptoms of depression and uplift those who are ill, aging, or lonely. Take advantage of the powers of sunlight by opening blinds and pulling back curtains to let natural light into the room. Cleaning dusty windows and removing items that block light can help make the room feel much brighter.

A naturally lit room boosts productivity, improves mood, and creates an overall tranquil atmosphere more so than an artificially-lit environment. However, if your home has few windows, try incorporating reflective surfaces. The amount of natural light will immediately double by allowing sunlight to reflect off strategically placed mirrors. Even if you do not have access to natural light in a room, turning on lamps and overhead lights at the appropriate times of day can help you feel more awake, more lively, and more positive.

Hang new artwork

Hanging meaningful artwork on the walls goes a long way toward inviting positive energy into the home. Hang your favorite artwork where you can appreciate it. Consider placing cards from friends or family and drawings done by your grandchildren in areas like the refrigerator or in frames on the living room and bedroom walls where you can clearly see them. Hanging meaningful artwork provides a constant reminder of love, light, and happiness.

Invite nature into your view

If you have a large window in your home, try placing a bird feeder directly outside of it where you can view it. Bird feeders come in a variety of sizes and can be hung from freestanding metal stands if there is not a nearby tree. Birds will start using the new feeder within a matter of days. Consider purchasing your loved one a book of native birds, so they can enjoy identifying the different species that visit, along with listening to their beautiful songs.

Add a houseplant

There's nothing to lift your mood like caring for another creature, even if it is just a plant. Bringing plants into your home offers many benefits. Plants filter toxins from indoor spaces and re-oxygenate. If you don't have a green thumb, try easy to grow and care for varieties such as snake plants or jade plants, as well as low-care succulents or ferns. If you're feeling adventurous, add even more beauty by choosing plants that flower, like lilies or orchids. Flowering plants give you something to look forward to every few months, and there is nothing quite like a beautiful bloom to make a space feel cheery.

Open the windows and bring the outside in

Studies show that spending time outdoors offers important health benefits such as reducing anxiety and lowering blood pressure. However, it can be difficult for seniors and their caregivers to spend a great deal of time in nature. Try the next best thing – as often as possible, open the windows to let some fresh air into the home. Opening windows also allows you to hear outdoor sounds such as birds, rain, or children playing and laughing down the street. Although it's not quite the same as being outdoors, opening windows can have a huge impact on your living space.

Add a little color

Adding a pop of color to a room can immediately make it feel brighter and more alive. Placing a few brightly colored throw pillows on the sofa, or draping a colorful quilt over your bed adds an instant boost. Color is proven to influence mood and lively colors like greens, yellows, and reds can have an immediate positive impact.

Indulge your sense of smell

Scent memory is a powerful tool. A familiar scent can transport us back in time. It can remind us of our grandmother's garden, or a happy getaway. Studies have shown that aromatherapy can contribute to making people feel happier. A pleasing scent instantly invites positive energy into a space. Choose an essential oil like lavender, rosemary, or tangerine and place a few drops into a diffuser. Essential oils are non-toxic and safe. They can help make a room smell fresh, bright, and happy for hours.

Taking steps to bring positive energy into the home is especially important in a home care setting. Incorporating as many of these tips as possible can help you make your home feel happier and brighter, which can have profound effects on your sense of well-being.



May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Every second counts when it comes to a stroke. Nearly 2 million brain cells can die each minute a stroke is left untreated. Rapid access to medical treatment often times makes the difference between a full recover and permanent damage.

Use the letters in “F.A.S.T.” to spot stroke signs and know when to call 9-1-1. **Face Drooping:** Does one side of the face droop or is it numb. Ask the person to smile. Is the

person’s smile uneven or lopsided? **Arm Weakness:** Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? **Speech:** Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or understand? **Time to Call 9-1-1:** If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to a hospital immediately.



The good news is there are measures we can take to prevent stroke by following The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Life’s Simple 7 Tips:

- Manage blood pressure
- Control your cholesterol
- Reduce your blood sugar
- Get active
- Eat better
- Lose weight
- Stop smoking



Visit stroke.org for more valuable information on stroke risk and prevention.

At Assisting Hands® we know that the first few months after a stroke are the most important in the recovery process. If you or a loved one are in need of in-home care, we can help you safely remain in your own home as you recover.

Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is INTERMEDIATE!

Visit www.krazydad.com for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

Sudoku puzzle courtesy of www.krazydad.com

		5	7	2		6	1	
	3	2					4	
				5	4			
					9		6	
1		6				7		2
	4		2					
			9	1				
	1					2	8	
	6	4		3	7	9		



Simply Delicious



BROWN RICE CHUTNEY SALAD

A simple rice salad in a cafe inspired thoughts of adding Indian spices and chutney to this dish. To fire things up, mix in a small amount of hot chili oil, tasting carefully as you go. – *courtesy of tasteofhome.com*

Prep Time: 30 min. + chilling; **Makes:** 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup mango chutney
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 8 cups cooked brown rice, cooled
- 3 medium carrots, shredded
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 small sweet red pepper, chopped
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 3 cups fresh baby spinach, chopped if desired
- 1 medium apple, chopped
- 1 cup salted cashews

Directions

• In a large bowl, whisk the first six ingredients. Add the rice, carrots, cranberries, red pepper and green onions; toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for several hours. Just before serving, add spinach and apple; toss to combine. Sprinkle with cashews.

Editor's Note Look for garam masala in the spice aisle.

STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM BITES

Strawberries and Cream Bites are easy to make because they begin with a cake mix and these tiny little treats are always a hit at parties!

Prep Time: 10 mins; **Cook Time:** 15 mins; **Servings:** 70

Ingredients

- 1 box strawberry cake mix cake mix
- 1 pkg 3.4 oz instant vanilla pudding mix
- 4 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups sour cream or greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup milk

Glaze

- 3 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 tsp strawberry extract
- 2 Tbs. butter melted
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup hot water

Directions

• Preheat the oven to 325. Coat mini muffin tins with cooking spray. (I used almost 3 full pans of 24). Beat the ingredients in a large bowl with an electric mixer for several minutes until blended and smooth.

• Fill each muffin hole about 1/2 full. I used a small cookie scoop and it worked perfectly!

• Bake for about 12 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

• Cool the pan on a wire rack for about 2 minutes and then turn the muffin pan over on a wire rack so that all the muffins are upside down. Cool completely and once all the batter is cooked, you can make the glaze.

GLAZE

• Place the wire racks over waxed paper. Beat the glaze ingredients in a medium bowl until smooth. Dip muffins in glaze to coat the bottoms (which are now the tops!) and the sides and let the excess drip off back into the bowl.

• Place each strawberry bite back on the wire racks until the glaze is set.