



# Florida REACH Project

Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health

## Prescription for Losing or Misplacing Things

**Specific Behavior:**

**Overall Goal of this Prescription:**

**Please remember that dealing with challenging behaviors can be stressful. The brief relaxation strategies will help you deal with stress when dealing with this challenge. In particular, we recommend using the signal breath technique immediately before you use the strategies suggested in this behavioral prescription.**

**Strategies for preventing a challenging behavior from occurring (try picking one thing and sticking with it for a few weeks):**

**People with memory problems often get confused and do not remember where everyday household items are kept. This may lead to your loved one placing items in the wrong places.**

1. Identify areas where misplaced items are commonly found.
2. Once you have identified places where you have found items in the past, look in these places first when an item is lost.
3. Create labels for closets, cabinets, drawers, etc. which tell what is in each.
4. Establish one place in the house for keeping frequently lost items.
5. If your loved one misplaces the mail, get important mail redirected to a post office box or get a home mail box that can be locked.
6. If your loved one throws things away, limit access to wastepaper baskets (e.g., allow access to only one basket and be sure to look through the basket before discarding the contents).



Other strategies:

**Strategies for guiding how you respond during or after a behavior occurs:**

**Remember that your loved one is not misplacing items on purpose. The disease is causing the behavior.**

1. The way you think about the behavior has a strong effect on your ability to handle the challenges of care giving.
2. Understanding the disease is responsible will allow you to be more objective.
3. Remain calm. Use signal breath when you are frustrated due to caregiving.
4. Remind your loved one to place items in their place after he/she uses the item (e.g., “Where do you put your wallet?”)
5. When the item is lost, help your loved one locate the item.
6. If he/she becomes frustrated or angry, redirect him/her away from the missing item with a pleasant distraction.

Other strategies:

**General Information:**

You are a dedicated caregiver and you are doing a great job. We understand that this can be very upsetting to you and are committed to helping you with this challenge. We believe these strategies will help and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks.

Remember that you can reach out to the social workers on your medical team if you have any questions or concerns.