

# Alexa for Alzheimer's

A simple guide for patients with dementia  
using the Alexa voice assistant

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*This book is dedicated to my children Sarina, Soniya, and Shashi*

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My UK clinical websites

**[www.neuropsychologyresources.com](http://www.neuropsychologyresources.com)**

**[www.londonmemoryclinic.com](http://www.londonmemoryclinic.com)**

**[www.abetternhs.com](http://www.abetternhs.com)**

One of my colleagues in India has set up a COVID rehab centre to help treat patients there who have been badly affected by COVID. There are a number of resources on that site. I have made my own resources free to download on her website. The resources include booklets that cover – Memory, Concentration, Word-Finding, Anger Management, Fatigue, Stress, Getting back to Work, Sleep and General Wellbeing. Please do download or look up any of the website resources if you feel they might be helpful. The website is – [www.indiacovidrehab.org](http://www.indiacovidrehab.org)

For cognitive stimulation, you may find my **Shark Attack** memory game fun to play! It is available both on the Apple App Store and on Google Play.



*This book is not meant to substitute for medical care of people who have Alzheimer's Disease or any other brain conditions, and treatment should not be based on its contents. Treatment should be based on professional medical advice. The author disclaims liability arising from the use or misuse of the guidance contained in the book.*

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# 1. About Alzheimer's

This book is designed to help patients with Alzheimer's Disease cope better with the effects of their condition. Alzheimer's Disease is a condition caused by the build up of abnormal proteins in the brain, and is associated with cell loss in key areas of the brain that control functions such as memory and concentration.

Alzheimer's Disease is a progressive condition, but the speed of that progression varies a lot between individuals. This booklet is intended more for those in the early stages of the disease, and some of those may have a diagnostic label of 'Mild Cognitive Impairment'. Coping well with the effects of Alzheimer's Disease usually entails coping with issues such as those listed below. Hopefully, use of Alexa as outlined in this book will help individuals with Alzheimer's Disease in the coping process.

- **Remembering to do things**
- **Treasuring past memories**
- **Engaging in stimulating, pleasurable and relaxing activities**
- **Keeping in touch with family and friends**
- **Knowing what's going on in the world**
- **Solving problems that arise from time to time**
- **Being in better control of the environment around you**

## 2. Setting up Alexa and Basics

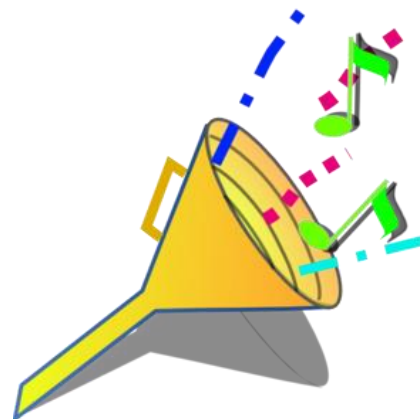
1. Connect the power cord to your Alexa Device
2. On your smartphone, download the Amazon Alexa app from Google Play Store/App Store, and follow instructions to complete the set-up
3. Log in with an existing Amazon account/create a new one on Alexa Device and on Alexa app on your smartphone
4. **\*\*During the set-up, make sure you have allowed Alexa Device to get access to your calendar and contacts**
5. Start using Alexa by saying, "Alexa, (then your instructions)"

- 
- **IMPORTANT Note 1:** Alexa takes time to adjust to your voice, so try not to get too frustrated when Alexa does not fully understand your sentence for now
  - **IMPORTANT Note 2:** You need to say the exact commands listed in each chapter, so Alexa understands what to do
  - **IMPORTANT Note 3:** Whenever you want to stop a command or function, say "Alexa, Stop" / "Alexa, Exit"
  - **IMPORTANT Note 4:** When you want to delete an item on a List, say "Alexa, Open (name of the List) List" → "Remove An Item" → "Item One/Two/..."
  - **IMPORTANT Note 5:** When you want to delete an item on a Reminder, say "Alexa, Open My Reminders" → "Remove A Reminder" → "Item One/Two/..."

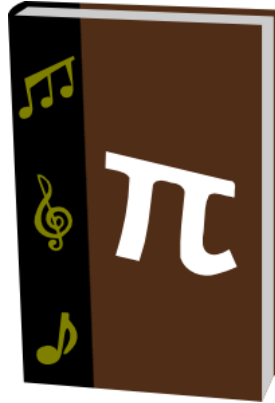
## 2. Setting up Alexa and Basics – cont.

Sometimes Alexa does not respond to voice commands at all regardless of what the command is or how the command is spoken, and it might be due to other factors such as background noise and Wi-Fi connection. Therefore, you might want to make sure that:

- Microphone is ON
- There is not too much noise around you when using wake word (e.g., “Alexa, ...”) or saying the commands (e.g., “Alexa, Open My Reminders”)
- Your Alexa Device is not muted
- Your Alexa Device has internet and power access
- Your Smartphone and Alexa Device are on the same Wi-Fi network
- Your Alexa Device is in Wi-Fi range and is not placed too far from the router



### 3. General Knowledge



#### HOW TO ASK ABOUT TODAY'S DATE

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, What’s Today’s Date?” / “Alexa, What’s The Time Now?”*

#### HOW TO ASK ABOUT THE WEATHER

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Check The Weather”*

## HOW TO ASK ABOUT PLACES

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Where Is (e.g., Regent’s Park)?”*

When you ask Alexa to find a location, for example where to shop, Alexa tends to give a list of locations and continues reading out the whole list. So, say to Alexa, ‘Alexa stop!’, as soon as Alexa suggests the location you are looking for.

## HOW TO ASK ABOUT TV PROGRAMMES

Say to Alexa – *‘Alexa, What’s On TV Tonight?’*

## HOW TO ASK ABOUT GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Say to Alexa – e.g., *“Alexa, Who’s The Prime Minister”*





## 4. Personal Knowledge

In this part of the guide, we will be covering –

- a. Date of birth
- b. Age
- c. Address
- d. Where personal possessions are kept
- e. Medication I need to take



### a. Date of birth

#### HOW TO ASK ALEXA FOR YOUR DATE OF BIRTH

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Open Birthday Tracker”* → *“Alexa, Add My Birthday”*

Then, you may ask Alexa – *“Alexa, Open Birthday Tracker”* → *“Alexa, When Is My Birthday?”*

### b. Age

#### HOW TO ASK ALEXA FOR YOUR AGE

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Open Birthday Tracker”* → *“Alexa, How Old Am I?”*

### c. Address

#### HOW TO ASK ALEXA FOR YOUR HOME ADDRESS

Say to Alexa – ‘*Alexa, Where Am I?*’ (for the first time, you may need to input your complete address by selecting Settings → Device Options → Device Location)

### d. Where personal possessions are kept

This can be used for when you need to remember where you’ve kept your personal belongings

#### HOW TO SET UP A PERSONAL POSSESSIONS LIST

“Alexa, Set Up A List” → (Alexa will then ask you the name for the List) → “Personal Possessions”

#### HOW TO ADD TO A PERSONAL POSSESSIONS LIST

“Alexa, Open Personal Possessions List” → “Alexa, Add An Item” → (Add your Reminder: e.g., “My Glasses Are In My Black Jacket”)

#### HOW TO RECALL A PERSONAL POSSESSIONS LIST

“Alexa, What Are Personal Possessions List?”

NB: The word “List” is required after the name you have chosen for the List

## e. Medication I need to take

This will help you keep track of when to take your medication.

### HOW TO SET UP A MEDICATION REMINDER

(Reminder comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

### HOW TO ADD TO A MEDICATION REMINDER

“Alexa, Add A Reminder” → (Add your Reminder: e.g., “Take My Cough Syrup”) → (e.g., “Every Day At 5pm”)

### HOW TO RECALL A MEDICATION REMINDER

“Alexa, Open My Reminders”



## 5. News and Sports

This section will cover –

- a. News
- b. Sports



Alexa allows access to streaming news coverage from top newsrooms. You can listen to top headlines and more.

### a. News

To hear the news, say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Play News”*, or to be more specific say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Play BBC News”*.

### b. Sports

To hear any sport related information, say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Give Me My Sports Update”*, or *“Alexa, Who Is Going To Play On The Next Football Match”*.

## 6. Relaxation

This chapter covers –

- a. Various relaxation exercises
- b. Music
- c. Books
- d. Physical exercise



### a. Various relaxation exercises

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE RELAXATION WITH ALEXA

Say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Open Guided Meditation”*. Alexa will then demonstrate one meditation routine. If this routine is not to your liking, then say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Play Next”*. Keep doing this till you find the routine that you like best.

### b. Music

#### HOW TO LISTEN TO MUSIC

For a random selection of songs, say to Alexa – *“Alexa, Play Music”*. Alexa will then play a song from her playlist.

But, if you would like something more specific, then say to Alexa – *‘Alexa, Play Something From The 90s’* or *‘Alexa, Play Something By Michael Jackson’* or even *‘Alexa, Play Calm Music’*

## c. Books

### HOW TO LISTEN TO BOOKS

To listen to an audiobook, say to Alexa – '*Alexa, Read Me A Book*'. But, if there's a specific book you would like to listen to, then say to Alexa – '*Alexa, Read Me Macbeth By William Shakespeare*'.

## d. Physical exercise

For a quick workout say to Alexa – '*Alexa, Open Five-Minute Workout*'



## 7. Solve Problems

This section will cover –

- a. Converting money
- b. Translation
- c. How to prepare a meal
- d. How to fix something broken



### a. Converting money

A quick way of converting money is to say to Alexa – “*Alexa, How Much Is Five Pounds Into Dollars?*”

### b. Translation

To translate any phrase, say to Alexa – “*Alexa, How Do You Say ‘See You Tomorrow’ In French?*”. Or “*Alexa, What Is The German Term For Hungry?*”

### c. How to prepare a meal

“*Alexa, How Do You Cook Lasagne?*” or “*Alexa, What’s The Recipe For Shepherd’s Pie?*”. Alexa will then give you a recipe from the internet.

#### d. How to fix something broken



For quick advice on how to fix something, just say to Alexa –  
*‘Alexa, How To Fix A (Broken Item: e.g., Broken Watch)?’*.



## 8. Communication with Others

This section will cover –

- a. Voice calls
- b. Video calls
- c. Messages



### a. Voice calls

To call either a family member or friend just say to Alexa –  
*“Alexa, Call (Name Of Contact)”*.

### b. Video calls

To video call either a family member or friend, say to Alexa –  
*“Alexa, Video Call (Name Of Contact)”*.

### c. Messages

To text a friend or family member just say to Alexa – “Alexa, text (name of contact) (message)”. For example – *“Alexa, Text Tim I’m Ready”*.

## 9. Family and Friends

Alexa provides a simple and easy way for you to stay connected to your loved ones.



This section will cover **family and friends** –

### HOW TO SET UP ALEXA TO REMEMBER INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY OR FRIENDS

“Alexa, Set Up A List” → (Alexa will then ask you the name for the List) → “Family”

### HOW TO ADD TO ALEXA REMEMBERING INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY OR FRIEND

“Alexa, Open Family List” → “Alexa, Add An Item” → (Add your information: e.g., “It’s My Grandson’s Birthday On The 5<sup>th</sup> of January” / “My Brother’s Name Is Jason”)

### HOW TO RECALL THE INFORMATION

“Alexa, Open Family List”

NB: The word “List” is required after the name you have chosen for the List

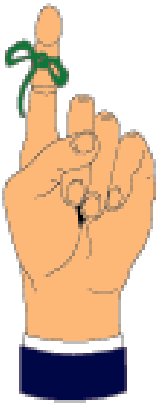
HOW TO CALL A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND  
Say to Alexa – “*Alexa, Call (Name Of Contact)*”.

## 10. Remembering to do Something

In this part of the guide, we will cover 4 types of Reminders –

- i. General Reminders*
- ii. Reminders that are tied in with a particular time or date*
- iii. Shopping List Reminders*
- iv. Medication Reminders*

### *i. General Reminders*



General reminders are reminders that are not tied up with any specific time or date. They are things you need or would like to keep in mind. So, examples of such reminders are –

- I need to be careful coming down the stairs
- I need to have my phone and watch on me all the time

#### HOW TO SET UP A GENERAL LIST

“Alexa, Set Up A List” → (Alexa will then ask you the name for the List) → “General”

NB: You can choose any other names for the List, e.g., “Safety”, but try not to include words such as “List” and “Reminder”

## HOW TO ADD TO A GENERAL LIST

“Alexa, Open General (or another name you have chosen) List” → “Alexa, Add An Item” → (Add your reminder: e.g., “I Need To Keep My Phone Charged”)

## HOW TO RECALL A GENERAL LIST

“Alexa, Open General (or another name you have chosen) List”

NB: The word “List” is required after the name you have chosen for the List



## *ii. Reminders tied to a time or date*



Time-specific reminders can come in three types –

- a. Regular events that occur every day, every week, every month or every year – say 8am every morning, every Monday, the first of every month or on a certain date every year
- b. Events that occur after a certain time, say after 20 minutes
- c. Events that occur on a certain date

### **a. Regular events that occur every day, every week, every month or every year**

#### HOW TO SET UP A REGULAR REMINDER

(Reminder comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

#### HOW TO ADD TO A REGULAR REMINDER

“Alexa, Add A Reminder” → (Add your reminder: e.g., “Take My Red Pill”) → (e.g., “Every Day At 5pm”)

#### HOW TO RECALL A REGULAR REMINDER

“Alexa, What Are My Reminders?”

## **b. Events that occur after a certain time, say after 20 minutes**

This is like setting up a timer, and could come in handy if you, for example, are boiling an egg and have to turn the oven off after a certain time

### **HOW TO SET UP A TIMER REMINDER**

(Reminder comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

### **HOW TO ADD TO A TIMER REMINDER**

“Alexa, Add A Reminder” → (Add your Reminder: e.g., “Turn The Oven Off”) → (e.g., “20 Minutes Later”)

### **HOW TO RECALL A TIMER REMINDER**

“Alexa, What Are My Reminders?”

### **c. Events that occur on a certain date**

This could be something like a hospital appointment on a certain date and at a certain time.

#### **HOW TO SET UP A DATE REMINDER**

(Reminder comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

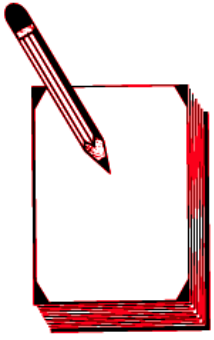
#### **HOW TO ADD TO A DATE REMINDER**

“Alexa, Add A Reminder” → (Add your Reminder: e.g., “Hospital Appointment”) → (e.g., “16<sup>th</sup> August At 3pm”)

#### **HOW TO RECALL A DATE REMINDER**

“Alexa, What Are My Reminders?”

### ***iii. Shopping Reminders***



This is used when you need to create or add to a shopping list, such as what to buy when you go to a supermarket

#### **HOW TO SET UP A SHOPPING LIST**

(Shopping list comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

#### **HOW TO ADD TO A SHOPPING LIST**

“Alexa, Add An Item To Shopping List” → (e.g., “Milk”)

#### **HOW TO RECALL AND EDIT A SHOPPING LIST**

“Alexa, Open Shopping List”

“Alexa, Delete (An Item, e.g., Milk)”



#### ***iv. Medication Reminders***



This is used when you need to remember to take medication

#### **HOW TO SET UP A MEDICATION REMINDER**

(Reminder comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

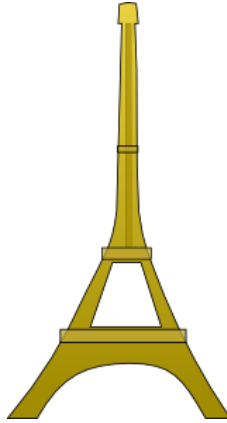
#### **HOW TO ADD TO A MEDICATION REMINDER**

“Alexa, Add A Reminder” → (Add your Reminder: e.g., “Take My Red Pill”) → (e.g., “Every Day At 5pm”)

#### **HOW TO RECALL A MEDICATION REMINDER**

“Alexa, What Are My Reminders?”

## 11. Memories of Past Events



### HOW TO SET UP ALEXA TO REMEMBER A PAST EVENT

“Alexa, Set Up A List” → (Alexa will then ask you the name for the List) → “Past Events”

NB: You can choose any other names for the List, e.g., “Memory”, but try not to include words such as “List” and “Reminder”

### HOW TO ADD TO ALEXA REMEMBERING A PAST EVENT

“Alexa, Open Past Events List” → “Alexa, Add An Item” → (Add your event: e.g., “I Went to Paris On The 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2020” / e.g., “I Was Married In 1989”)

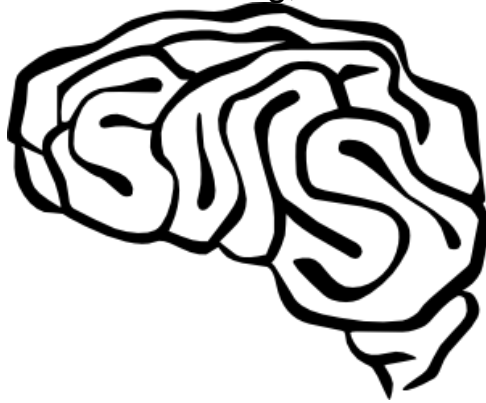
### HOW TO RECALL AN EVENT

“Alexa, Open Past Events List”

NB: The word “List” is required after the name you have chosen for the List

## 12. Cognitive Stimulation

This section offers a range of ways for you to access enjoyable quizzes and games. This helps with general stimulation of thinking, concentration, and memory.



TO GAIN ACCESS TO GAMES

Just say to Alexa *“Alexa, I Want To Play Games”*

TO GAIN ACCESS TO QUIZZES

Just say to Alexa *“Alexa, Give Me A Quiz”*

TO HEAR A JOKE

Just say to Alexa *“Alexa, Tell Me A Joke”*

## 13. Control Home Equipment/Devices



### HOW TO SET UP HOME EQUIPMENT CONTROL

You need to first purchase smart devices (e.g., smart lights, smart lamp, smart thermostat)

Then, follow the instructions on your smart devices to complete the set-up

Next, say to Alexa – “Alexa, Discover Devices” to complete the pairing

### HOW TO CONTROL HOME EQUIPMENT

“Alexa, Turn On/Off The (e.g., Lights, Lamps, etc.)”

## 14. Alexa Skills

Alexa Skills are like apps. You can add various Alexa Skills to your Alexa Device, by saying keywords based on your needs such as memory, sleep, learning, entertainment, etc.



### HOW TO SET UP ALEXA SKILLS

“Alexa, Recommend Skills for Memory/Sleep/Learning/...”

### HOW TO START ALEXA SKILLS

“Alexa, Open (name of the Skill, e.g., Memory Game)”

## 15. Alexa Smart Watches

Some Smart Watches have Alexa installed, so they can synchronise with your Alexa Device. Take YONMIG Smart Watch as an example:

### HOW TO START ALEXA ON YONMIG SMART WATCH

Press the button on your smart watch, hold it until you see the Alexa icon

### HOW TO USE ALEXA ON YONMIG SMART WATCH

“Alexa, (start with instructions: e.g., What Are My Reminders? / Open General List / ...)”

Take Noise ColorFit Pro 3 Smart Watch as another example:

### HOW TO START ALEXA ON NOISE COLORFIT PRO 3

Press the button on your smart watch, hold it until you see the Alexa icon

### HOW TO USE ALEXA ON NOISE COLORFIT PRO 3

“Alexa, (start with instructions: e.g., Set An Alarm / Count Down / ...)”



Take Noise ColorFit Pro 3 Smart Watch as another example to set up a shopping list:

### HOW TO SET UP A SHOPPING LIST

(Shopping list comes with your factory setting so there is no need to set it up)

### HOW TO ADD TO A SHOPPING LIST

“Alexa, Add An Item To Shopping List” → (e.g., “Milk”)

### HOW TO RECALL AND EDIT A SHOPPING LIST

“Alexa, Open Shopping List”

“Alexa, Delete (An Item, e.g., Milk)”

If you want to know more about the potential benefits (e.g., medical alert, sleep tracking) of smart watches, check out this link -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3EJZI8nOC0>

## 16. Useful Resources

You can find a list of Alexa-related resources below. The listing is not meant to be detailed or exhaustive, nor meant to be an endorsement of information on the sites. In addition, some websites may lapse over time.



<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementia-together-magazine/oct-nov-2018/can-amazon-alexa-or-echo-help-my-step-dad-dementia>

An article from Alzheimer's Society discussing the use of Alexa

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/staying-independent/using-technology-everyday-life#content-start>

Articles from Alzheimer's Society introducing benefits and difficulties of assistive technology for person with dementia

<https://www.actodementia.com/>

AcTo Dementia provides recommendations and guidance on accessible touchscreen apps for people living with dementia

<https://dailycaring.com/amazon-echo-for-dementia-technology-for-seniors/>

Introducing the use of Alexa for seniors with dementia

<https://seniorsafetyadvice.com/products/technology/alexa-products-for-the-home/>

Introducing various Alexa Devices for home

<https://www.alzproducts.co.uk/>

AlzProducts is a UK Alzheimer's and dementia specialist shop

<https://dayoneapp.com/>

Day One is a useful smartphone app to keep a life journal recording your day-to-day memories

<https://www.theinspiredapp.com/>

InspireD is another helpful app capturing photographs, sounds, and videos of your daily life

<https://www.vats.org/learn.htm>

Website of the Virginia Assistive Technology System – has some excellent videos and resources for coping with symptoms such as memory difficulties.