

How the wrong flooring can aggravate Dementia



There are many things to consider when adapting a home for a patient suffering with dementia—so much so that it can be difficult to know where to start.

It goes without saying that safety is a priority, so addressing any obvious hazards is of the utmost importance. But once these dangers are removed, there are still many elements in and around the home that dementia patients can find confusing or distressing.

A [recent survey](#) revealed just how little the public know about adapting a home for a dementia patient. Worryingly, 30% of those surveyed admitted that they simply wouldn't know what to do, while a further 12% conceded they would place their loved one in a care home to ensure that they received the correct treatment.

Interestingly, only 7% of those surveyed said they would address the home's interior décor, when in fact this can make a big difference to a dementia patient's comfort.

Flooring, in particular, can cause dementia sufferers considerable distress—especially if the design features a strong pattern, flecks or is highly reflective. This extract from the Alzheimer's Society guide to making a home dementia-friendly explains:

“Changes in the colour of the floor from room to room, rugs or dark floor mats can sometimes look like something you need to step over. Shiny floors can look wet or slippery and speckles in flooring may look like litter.”

Other adaptations that can be made to interior décor to avoid confusing dementia patients include:

- choosing bright-coloured furniture that, by contrasting with the décor, makes it easily identifiable
- avoiding strong patterns or stripes
- installing good lighting, as this will help make day-to-day tasks much easier
- using clear signs on cupboards, drawers and doors to indicate what's inside
- decluttering where possible, and keeping drawers and cupboards tidy
- choosing tablecloths and crockery in colours that contrast with the colours of food

Gilly Craft, Director of [Koubou Interiors](#) and President of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID), stresses the importance of keeping a residence homely and comfortable, despite the need to make adaptations.

“There are rules but these shouldn't mean that the interior looks institutionalised,” Gilly said. “Just think about movement through the space and how the patient will view the home overall. It needs to be comfortable, welcoming and homely.”