



Calm Nights Toolkit

When Evenings Feel Heavy

Evenings can be the hardest part of the day in Lewy Body Dementia.

As light fades, fear can rise. Confusion deepens. Shadows shift. The brain is tired. The nervous system is worn thin — theirs and yours.

This guide is here to help you steady the room.

Not perfectly.
Not magically.
Just gently.

Step 1: Ease Into Evening (Before Sundown Hits)

Small changes earlier in the day often prevent bigger storms later.

- Close curtains before dusk to reduce reflections
- Turn on lamps before the room gets dark
Lower household noise after late afternoon
- Reduce caffeine after lunchtime
- Choose calm TV or music instead of news
- Keep dinner simple and familiar
- Begin a consistent “evening rhythm” at the same time nightly

Remember: Predictability feels like safety.

Step 2: Adjust the Lighting

Lighting matters more than we think.

- ✓ Use warm, soft lamps instead of overhead glare
- ✓ Add night lights in hallway and bathroom

- ✓ Reduce shadows in corners and mirrors
- ✓ Consider motion-activated floor lighting
- ✓ Avoid harsh blue or bright white light late at night

Shadows can feel like threats to a confused brain.

Step 3: When Fear Shows Up

If agitation or fear begins:

Instead of correcting... try calming.

Instead of explaining... try reassuring.

Helpful phrases:

- “You’re safe. I’m right here.”
- “I’ve got you.”
- “Let’s sit together for a minute.”
- “You don’t have to figure this out right now.”
- “Everything is okay.”

Fear does not respond to logic.

It responds to safety.

Step 4: Ground the Body

Simple sensory anchors can settle the nervous system:

- Warm blanket
- Holding hands
- Gentle shoulder touch
- Warm tea
- Soft music
- Dimmed lamps
- Slow breathing together

If possible, lower your own voice and slow your movements. Your calm becomes their anchor.

When Hallucinations or Paranoia Appear

In Lewy Body Dementia, nighttime may intensify visual hallucinations or suspicion.

Instead of:

- “There’s nothing there.”
- “That’s not real.”

Try:

- “That sounds scary.”
- “I don’t see it, but I believe you’re feeling it.”
- “You’re safe with me.”
- “Let’s move to a brighter room.”

You don’t have to agree with the hallucination.

You just need to respond to the emotion.

Night Safety Check

Before bed each night:

- Clear walkways
- Remove trip hazards

- Keep bathroom light accessible
- Keep glasses/hearing aids nearby
- Keep a flashlight within reach
- Consider motion-sensor night lights

Safety reduces fear.

When It’s Just a Hard Night

Some nights won’t respond to all the checklists.

That doesn’t mean you failed.

It means the brain is tired.

On those nights:

- Lower expectations
- Sit instead of solve
- Breathe instead of fix
- Remind yourself this is the disease, not you

A Gentle Reminder for You

You are not weak because nighttime exhausts you.

You are not failing because evenings are unpredictable.

You are doing complex neurological care in the dark.

That is extraordinary.

Keep this by the bedside.

Use what helps.

Ignore what doesn’t.

And remember — you are not alone in the night.

— Nora Poppins

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