



## Standards for Fidget Blanket/Mat

Fidget blankets are small lap quilts with different textures to feel, colors to see and things to open and close to keep the hands busy. They are intended for adults with dementia, autism or Alzheimer's disease to keep their hands busy and soothe the agitation that often accompanies these disorders. The mats help focus attention, stimulate the senses, exercise hand muscles and entertain the user.

The suggested parameters for fidget blankets/mats are as follows:

1. Dimensions should be squares or rectangles measuring between 18" – 24".
2. Patients prefer soft fabrics, but there needs to be some stability. Batting is not always necessary.
3. Bright colors are attractive, especially red and orange, because those are the colors most easily seen when a person's vision starts to dim. Mix bright colors with muted, calming colors.
4. The top layer of a mat can be made from a variety of fabrics, including flannel, "Minky", fleece, corduroy, pre-quilted cottons, satin, felt, or the front of an old shirt! The mats could also be made from pieced squares of fabric. Make sure seams are sewn securely. If the bottom layer is made from flannel, fleece, terry cloth, "Minky", felt or other fabric with a nap, the mat will stay more securely on the patient's lap.

- a. If the top is made from pieced cottons, a layer of stabilizer or light batting may be necessary to make the mat durable.
5. Items for the top of the mat might include lace, smooth and rough ribbons, mesh, rickrack, folded prairie points, decorative trims, artificial fur, buttons, zippers, small plush animals, pom-poms, NO BEADS (they are being ripped off and are now a choking hazard). Patients love the sound and feel of Velcro. The ideas are limitless! Just be sure all items/strings are washable and **CAN NOT BE RIPPED OFF, PULLED OR WRAPPED AROUND THEIR FINGERS.** No metal objects. No Styrofoam or corks. Make sure buttons can withstand heated drying and are very well secured.
  - a. Zippers could be sewn in a way that allows the user to open and close the zipper. Suggested length is 7"-9".
  - b. All items should be sewn down so that no loops or strings extend more than 2-3 inches from the surface of the mat. Items should pass the "tug test" and not come loose with hard pulling.
  - c. Pockets made from old jeans, or a shirt are interesting if there's an object the pull in and out of the pocket. Make sure the object is secure and can withstand pulling.
  - d. Things that make a light clicking sound, like plastic rings or beads, are great as long as they are confined/secured within a piece of material. Avoid objects that would be loud or too stimulating (bells, metals, musical sounds)
  - e. Knit scraps, cording or shoelaces can be used for braiding or lacing. Make sure fabric loops are securely attached anything measuring over 2-3 inches is too long.
  - f. Both men and women will use these mats, so try including some fabrics or decorations that would be interesting to either one.

The ideas for Fidget quilts/blankets/mats are only limited by your imagination! Get a group together and share ideas. We appreciate your efforts in making these for our patient and they will be loved!

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