



End-of-Life Home Preparation Checklist

Preparing the home, family, and environment for a peaceful transition

End-of-life care is sacred.

The goal is not to control the process, rush the process, or make everything perfect. The goal is to create a calm, loving container where the person preparing for transition feels honored, safe, and supported — and where loved ones have room to be present.

This checklist is designed to help families gently prepare the home, room, rhythm, and environment for a peaceful end-of-life season.

Use it slowly. Not everything needs to be done at once. Let the person, the home, and the moment guide what is needed.

I. The Overall Feeling of the Home

Before preparing the room, pause and feel the whole home.

End-of-life care affects the entire household. The emotional atmosphere, noise level, clutter, conversations, food, visitors, and daily rhythm all shape the experience.

Notice:

- Does the home feel calm or chaotic?
- Is there too much noise, movement, or urgency?
- Are family members overwhelmed, afraid, or exhausted?
- Are there areas that feel cluttered, heavy, or stressful?
- Is the home supporting presence, prayer, quiet, and love?
- Are people rushing, forcing, or trying to control the process?
- Does the home feel peaceful enough for transition?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Turn off unnecessary background noise
- Open windows for fresh air if appropriate
- Clear one area of clutter
- Prepare simple food or tea for the family
- Lower the lights
- Create a quiet rhythm in the home
- Move stressful conversations away from the bedside
- Pray through the home or speak blessing over the space

Reflection:

What does the home need less of right now?

What does the home need more of?

What would make the home feel more peaceful today?

2. The Room

The room should feel peaceful, clean, simple, and easy to be in.

It does not need to be perfect. It needs to support comfort, presence, dignity, and transition.

Notice:

- Is the room clean, peaceful, and uncluttered?
- Is the bed positioned comfortably?
- Is there room for loved ones to sit nearby?
- Is there space for caregivers to move easily?
- Are harsh sounds, bright lights, and unnecessary stimulation reduced?
- Are meaningful objects nearby?
- Is there fresh air or a window if appropriate?
- Does the room feel sacred, calm, and respectful?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Clear the bedside table
- Remove unnecessary clutter
- Wash or change linens
- Add soft lighting
- Place flowers nearby
- Add a meaningful photo, prayer item, Bible, candle, or sacred object if desired
- Create a chair or resting place for loved ones
- Remove anything that feels stressful, clinical, or emotionally heavy

Reflection:

What would make the room feel more peaceful?

What object or detail would bring comfort?

What needs to be removed from the room?

3. Light, Sound & Sensory Environment

The senses become very important near the end of life.

Light, sound, smell, touch, and the feeling of the room can either soothe the nervous system or create stress.

Notice:

- Is the lighting soft and gentle?
- Are LED lights making the room feel harsh or cold?
- Is there too much noise?
- Are televisions, phones, or devices creating stimulation?
- Are strong scents, perfumes, or chemical fragrances present?
- Is the room too hot, too cold, too dry, or too stuffy?
- Would the person prefer music, prayer, silence, scripture, nature sounds, or nothing at all?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Replace LED bulbs with incandescent bulbs where possible
- Use lamps instead of overhead lighting
- Lower lights in the evening

- Turn off unnecessary screens
- Reduce phone volume and alerts
- Remove artificial fragrances
- Use soft music, prayer, scripture, or silence if desired
- Open a window briefly if appropriate
- Keep the room calm and low-stimulation

Reflection:

What sound feels comforting?

What light feels peaceful?

What sensory input needs to be reduced?

4. Comfort & Body Care

The body deserves tenderness and dignity.

Comfort care is not about forcing the body to do more. It is about listening, softening, and supporting what the body is asking for.

Notice:

- Is the person physically comfortable?
- Are pillows and blankets arranged supportively?
- Are lips, hands, feet, and skin being cared for gently?
- Is the person too hot or too cold?
- Is the person being repositioned with care if needed?
- Are clothing, bedding, and touch respectful of their dignity?
- Is the body being listened to rather than forced?
- Are care tasks happening calmly, not urgently?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Offer a warm blanket
- Adjust pillows
- Apply lip balm if appropriate
- Gently warm or cover hands and feet

- Use soft, clean linens
- Reduce unnecessary handling
- Speak before touching or moving the person
- Ask permission when possible
- Keep the atmosphere tender and respectful

Reflection:

What seems to bring comfort?

What seems to create stress or discomfort?

How can the body be honored more gently?

5. Nourishment & Hydration

Food and drink can change near the end of life.

This is a time to listen closely. The body may want less food, different textures, small sips, warmth, or simply comfort. The goal is not to force nourishment, but to offer it with tenderness when appropriate.

Notice:

- Is the person asking for food or drink?
- Are they able to swallow safely?
- Are there signs of discomfort with eating or drinking?
- Are broths, teas, soft foods, or gentle comfort foods available if appropriate?
- Is the family pressuring the person to eat?
- Is the body clearly asking for less?
- Are caregivers nourished and hydrated too?

Supportive Foods When Appropriate:

- Warm broth
- Herbal tea
- Soft cooked foods
- Simple soups
- Applesauce or soft fruit if tolerated
- Small sips of water

- Honey or lemon tea if desired
- Gentle comfort foods requested by the person

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Prepare tea or broth
- Stop pressuring food
- Offer small sips only if appropriate
- Keep water nearby
- Prepare nourishing food for caregivers
- Ask what sounds comforting
- Honor when the body says no

Reflection:

What does the body seem to want?

What does the body seem to be refusing?

How can nourishment be offered without pressure?

6. Family & Loved Ones

End-of-life care affects everyone.

Loved ones may feel grief, fear, guilt, exhaustion, tenderness, uncertainty, or a desire to say everything perfectly. The goal is not perfection. The goal is presence.

Notice:

- Do loved ones understand what the person wants?
- Are visitors being managed with care?
- Is the room too crowded or emotionally intense?
- Are family members eating, resting, and drinking water?
- Are people being given permission to speak, pray, sing, cry, sit quietly, or simply be present?
- Are hard conversations happening gently?
- Is someone helping reduce chaos and emotional overwhelm?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Create visiting rhythms
- Limit overstimulating visitors
- Prepare food for the family
- Encourage quiet presence
- Invite loved ones to say what they need to say
- Create space for prayer or blessing
- Move conflict away from the bedside
- Remind the family that presence matters more than perfection

Reflection:

What does the family need in order to be more present?

Who needs support right now?

What conversation or blessing wants to happen?

7. Practical Organization

Practical details can become overwhelming near the end of life.

Organizing them gently can help reduce stress and allow the family to be more present.

Notice:

- Are important documents easy to find?
- Are hospice, care providers, or emergency contacts written down?
- Are medications and supplies organized?
- Are funeral or after-death wishes known?
- Is there a plan for who to call when death occurs?
- Are pets, household tasks, meals, and daily logistics being cared for?
- Is one person carrying too much responsibility?
- Are there items that need to be gathered in one place?

Useful Information to Gather:

- Hospice contact
- Doctor or care provider contact
- Emergency contact

- Medication list
- Allergies
- Funeral home or after-death contact
- Legal documents if available
- Preferred spiritual or religious support
- Family point person
- Pet or household care plan

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Write down key contacts
- Organize medications and supplies
- Create a simple care notebook
- Assign household tasks
- Prepare meals for caregivers
- Clarify who to call first
- Gather important documents in one place

Reflection:

What practical detail is creating stress?

What needs to be written down?

What can be delegated?

8. Spiritual & Emotional Care

The final season of life often opens the heart.

There may be prayer, forgiveness, fear, gratitude, silence, blessing, grief, or peace. Spiritual care should honor the person's beliefs, wishes, and relationship with God.

Notice:

- Does the person want prayer, scripture, music, silence, or ritual?
- Are their beliefs being honored?
- Is there space for forgiveness, gratitude, blessing, or goodbye?
- Are loved ones trying to force a spiritual moment?

- Is there emotional pain that needs gentle witnessing?
- Is there peace in the room?
- Is the person being allowed to transition in their own way?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Pray quietly
- Read scripture if desired
- Play meaningful music
- Invite forgiveness gently
- Speak words of love and gratitude
- Sit in silence
- Offer a blessing
- Hold their hand if welcomed
- Create space for goodbye without pressure

Reflection:

What spiritual support feels aligned?

What words still need to be spoken?

What would help the room feel sacred?

9. The Hours After Transition

The time after death is sacred.

There is no need to rush if the situation allows for a quiet pause. Loved ones may need time for prayer, stillness, tears, touch, silence, or goodbye.

Notice:

- Does the family know who to call first?
- Is there space for a sacred pause?
- Are loved ones being rushed unnecessarily?
- Is the body being treated with dignity?
- Is there support for the quiet hours after passing?
- Are children, elders, or sensitive family members supported?

- Are cultural, spiritual, or religious wishes being honored?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Allow silence
- Pray or speak blessing
- Open a window if desired
- Light a candle if safe and appropriate
- Sit with the body
- Let loved ones say goodbye
- Call hospice or the appropriate contact
- Move slowly and respectfully
- Ask for support if the family feels overwhelmed

Reflection:

What would make the hours after transition feel peaceful?

What does the family need in that moment?

What wishes should be honored?

10. Your First End-of-Life Home Preparation Step

Start with the step that brings the most peace.

Choose one:

- Prepare the room
- Soften lighting
- Reduce noise
- Organize contacts
- Prepare nourishment
- Support caregivers
- Manage visitors
- Create a prayer space
- Gather meaningful objects
- Clarify wishes

My first preparation step is:

One thing I will remove:

One thing I will soften:

One thing I will organize:

One thing I will prepare:

One support I will ask for:

Closing Reflection

End-of-life care does not have to be perfect to be sacred.

A peaceful transition is supported by tenderness, presence, simplicity, nourishment, prayer, dignity, and love.

The home can become a sanctuary for the final season of life.

Not because everything is controlled.

But because everything is held with care.

Gentle Note

This checklist is not medical advice, hospice care, diagnosis, or treatment. It is a reflective and practical tool to help families prepare the home, room, rhythm, and environment for a peaceful end-of-life transition.

For personalized end-of-life doula support, visit:

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Creating Sanctuary, Nurturing People, Inspiring Transformation