**The Most Frequent Skills a Nurse Will Use in a Nursing Home**
*AKA: Why Long-Term Care Nurses Deserve Capes and Coffee on IV Drip*

Working in a nursing home is not just about passing meds and checking boxes. It’s a full-contact sport of clinical skill, emotional intelligence, and master-level multitasking. Nurses in long-term care settings use a specific set of high-frequency skills every single day—and if you're headed into the world of nursing homes, here's what you'll be using (and perfecting) nonstop.

**💊 1. Medication Administration**

This one’s constant. Morning, noon, night, and sometimes 3 a.m. if insomnia’s kicking in.

* Oral meds, patches, eye drops, insulin, injections—you name it.
* Knowing *who* takes *what*, *when*, and *how* (especially those with 10+ meds).
* Watching for side effects, allergies, and drug interactions like a hawk with a stethoscope.

**Bonus skill:** Diplomatically convincing a resident to take their Lasix when they “don’t feel like peeing today.”

**🩹 2. Wound Care**

If you don’t know how to stage a pressure ulcer, don’t worry—you will.

* Daily dressing changes
* Pressure injury prevention
* Infection control
* Collaboration with wound care specialists

And yes, you’ll get very good at spotting cellulitis from 6 feet away.

**🧠 3. Cognitive & Behavioral Observation**

Many residents have dementia, delirium, or other cognitive impairments.

* Assessing orientation, memory, and behavior shifts
* Documenting patterns and interventions
* De-escalating aggressive or confused behavior with calm, assertive communication

This is where your *patience* and *people-wrangling* skills shine.

**💬 4. Communication Skills (Verbal & Written)**

You're the central hub between CNAs, physicians, families, social workers, and dietary staff.

* Giving shift reports
* Calling the doctor with updates
* Comforting distraught family members
* Writing chart notes that are accurate, objective, and litigation-proof

If you can explain constipation in three different tones—clinical, compassionate, and comedic—you’re ready.

**👩‍⚕️ 5. Assessment Skills**

Forget the fancy hospital machines—you’ll use your senses and your gut.

* Daily head-to-toe checks
* Monitoring for skin breakdown, infection, dehydration, or pain
* Noticing subtle changes in behavior that signal bigger problems
* Using critical thinking when something feels "off"

That sixth sense for a UTI? It gets stronger every week.

**💉 6. Basic Procedures & Hands-On Clinical Care**

Think foundational—but constant.

* Catheter care
* Blood glucose checks
* Vital signs
* Ostomy care
* PEG tube maintenance
* Fall risk prevention
* CPR/BLS when needed (though code blues in LTC are rare)

These are the bread-and-butter skills that keep residents safe and functional.

**🤝 7. Team Leadership & Supervision**

Even if you're an LPN, you’re often managing a small team.

* Delegating tasks to CNAs
* Following up on ADL completion
* Training new staff or orienting float nurses
* Ensuring continuity of care across shifts

You’re not just a nurse—you’re a floor boss, sometimes with 25+ residents under your watch.

**📅 8. Time Management & Prioritization**

It’s an Olympic sport in nursing homes.

* Juggling med passes with wound care, family calls, admissions, and behavioral issues
* Deciding what *must* be done now vs. what can wait 30 minutes
* Handling 3 alarms and a fall at once without breaking a sweat—or at least not showing it

Every minute counts. And every charted line better be backed up by your actions.

**🕊️ 9. End-of-Life & Palliative Care**

Not every nurse is cut out for this—but in nursing homes, it’s sacred work.

* Recognizing signs of decline
* Administering comfort meds
* Supporting families emotionally
* Providing peaceful transitions when the time comes

This is where nursing becomes both science and soul.

**👁️ 10. Observation, Intuition & Resident Advocacy**

Sometimes, what’s not said is more important than what is.

* Spotting emotional distress
* Detecting signs of abuse or neglect
* Advocating for residents who can’t speak up for themselves
* Documenting and reporting with professional precision

You become a guardian of dignity, day in and day out.

**Final Word:**

Working in a nursing home will sharpen your clinical skills, toughen your skin, and soften your heart—often all in the same shift. These high-frequency skills are the foundation of great care for some of society’s most vulnerable individuals. Master these, and you’re not just a good nurse—you’re a **legend in scrubs**.