

# A Musical Guide for people with dementia and their carers during Covid-19

In these times of social distancing it's important that we try and incorporate music into the lives of people living with dementia and their carers to help us stay connected.

Music has huge benefits for people with dementia and those caring for them. It helps reduce agitation, depression and anxiety, alongside improving general health and wellbeing.

Detailed below is a Practical Musical Guide that offers ideas on how to keep the music going!

**Cultural differences and music** – Music and rhythm are not always expressed through songs. In some cultures they can be used in meditation or worship. In others, while music may not be a part of worship the recitation of scripture can have melody within the spoken form which gives the listener peace of mind or tranquillity.

Religious music in various cultures can exist outside of worship. It is worth thinking about how you might use music, rhythm or recitation to help someone find comfort in their dementia.

**1 Have a musical conversation via a phone or video call** – Whether you're creating a playlist for someone with or without language, it's important to try and communicate with them about their music and whether they would like to make a playlist with you. Help them to be part of their musical soundtrack by involving them from the very beginning. If you are using a video call, they may not be able to answer you in sentences or with words, but they might nod, smile or shake their head. Perhaps hum a phrase or two from a song to help get your musical conversation started. Check out our easy to use [guides](#) and create a playlist today



**2 Go old school** – Look to see if your loved one has any favourite CDs, vinyl or old mix tapes and ask them which is their favourite – then see if there's a way of being able to play them on an existing stereo or copy into a digital library on your computer or device.



**3 Listen to a radio show** – There are some amazing musical radio shows that bring the best of radio from past decades, made for people with dementia. Check out [BBC Memory Radio](#) and [m4d Radio](#) to name a few.



**4 Watch live music in the comfort of your own home** – Between music-focused TV programmes, apps, streaming video services, and various websites, there are so many brilliant performances available to watch through your TV or computer. Why not experience your favourite live musicians from the comfort of your sofa?



**5 Watch a musical film** – Research has shown that films centred around music, interactivity and simple plot lines can be ideal for people living with dementia. Our favourites include Singing in the Rain, Laurel and Hardy, Sound of Music, Wizard of Oz, West Side Story, Jungle Book, Grease, Mary Poppins – what's yours?



**6 Experience a virtual music event** – many of our amazing musical mappers are creating their events virtually. From virtual discos to virtual choirs contact your local group and see what you can get involved with through our website - [www.musicalmap.co.uk](http://www.musicalmap.co.uk)



**7 Make a playlist** – This is a perfect example of sharing music and love across communities. Make someone you know a playlist today by using [our guides](#). And don't forget to make yourself one as well – What music really gets you up dancing, makes you smile, gives goose bumps up your neck.



**8 Stream Music** – While the radio and record players are still our favourites, there are new ways to listen to music. Check out [YouTube](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Spotify](#), [Google Play](#), [Apple Music](#), [BBC Music Memories](#), to name a few.



**9 Get children involved** – Ask your child or young adult to become a Music Detective for someone living with dementia. They can help people track down the soundtrack to their life and turn it into a playlist – [Find out more](#)



**10 What do we listen to?** – To find out what the big tunes were within each decade have a look at this great resource for individuals, families or reminiscence and singing groups - [Playlist for Life. 100 Years: A Century of Song](#)



**11 Don't know the name of the song but know the lyrics** – check out this website to give you some help – [Find song by lyrics](#)



**12 Create a musical quiz** – It appears that people living with dementia retain clearest memories for music they enjoyed and heard between roughly the ages of 10 and 30. Why not create a music quiz for them and learn about their musical favourites?



**13 Learn an instrument** – laying musical instruments and listening to music throughout your life has been shown to stimulate and protect the brain. So maybe now is the perfect time to start learning a guitar, piano, ukulele, harmonica or drums – whatever instrument you may have in your home. Get those fingers moving and your brain cells firing!



Use hashtag [#musicfordementia](#) on your favourite social media to share your musical stories with us

