



A-Z of Activities

Musical activities

Many people enjoy music and it plays a significant role at social and cultural events. It can be calming and restful or stimulating and stirring.

See the checklist for musical activities

What the activity can do for the residents	What do you need?	What to be aware of
<p>Movement – hand dexterity and coordination, upper limb movement, dancing and moving to music, balance, singing, healthy breathing.</p> <p>Sensory – listening to the music and moving to it, touch for playing instruments, dancing with others.</p> <p>Emotional – choosing music of personal significance, self-expression, meeting spiritual needs.</p> <p>Cognitive – using memory, concentration, thought and mood provoking, recall and reminiscence.</p> <p>Social – interaction and communication, enjoyment, relaxation.</p>	<p>Facilities You will need space or a room with minimal disturbance during sessions.</p> <p>Possible equipment could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD/media player, plus a selection of music, sing-along tapes (you can also use television and DVDs). • Selection of instruments from piano to simple percussion. • Large-print song sheets. • Selection of apparatus such as coloured paper napkins, sticks/batons of different lengths for percussion, coloured ribbons attached to batons. <p>Staff/skills You don't need any musical talent to run these activities, but it's great if anyone at the home plays a musical instrument.</p>	<p>It is worth noting that people who have language difficulties – for example, following a stroke or due to dementia – can often still sing familiar songs and dance to old tunes.</p> <p>Also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding any single type of recorded music for more than half an hour. • Rhythm bands and 'piano plonking' can drive people to distraction. • Remembering that not everyone likes music. 'Wallpaper' music can trigger stress, as constant background noise causes irritation, especially to people with impaired hearing. • Vary the type, mood, volume and tempo of music throughout the day, and in keeping with the time of day and activity. For example, play something soothing just before bedtime.



A-Z of Activities



Musical activities

Music can be incorporated into so many other activities that it is impossible to list all the options. Here are some ideas:

- Listen to recorded music or a personal MP3/iPod playlist.
- Listen to live music.
- Use music for reminiscence: sing old songs and favourites.
- Tea dances.
- Singing – encourage sing-alongs, karaoke, hymn singing. Song sheets can be found on the internet.
- Combine music and physical activity; (for example, seated exercises or theme-based quizzes).
- Use music as the basis for a relaxation session (see Relaxation).
- Making music – collect a range of instruments and encourage residents to ‘play’ along.
- Use music as part of worship.
- Find out what music each resident enjoys and use it as appropriate during the day, to enhance daily care. For people at the end of their life music provides sensory stimulation, offers comfort and can help to meet spiritual needs. It is important to know their preferences in advance or from family and friends.