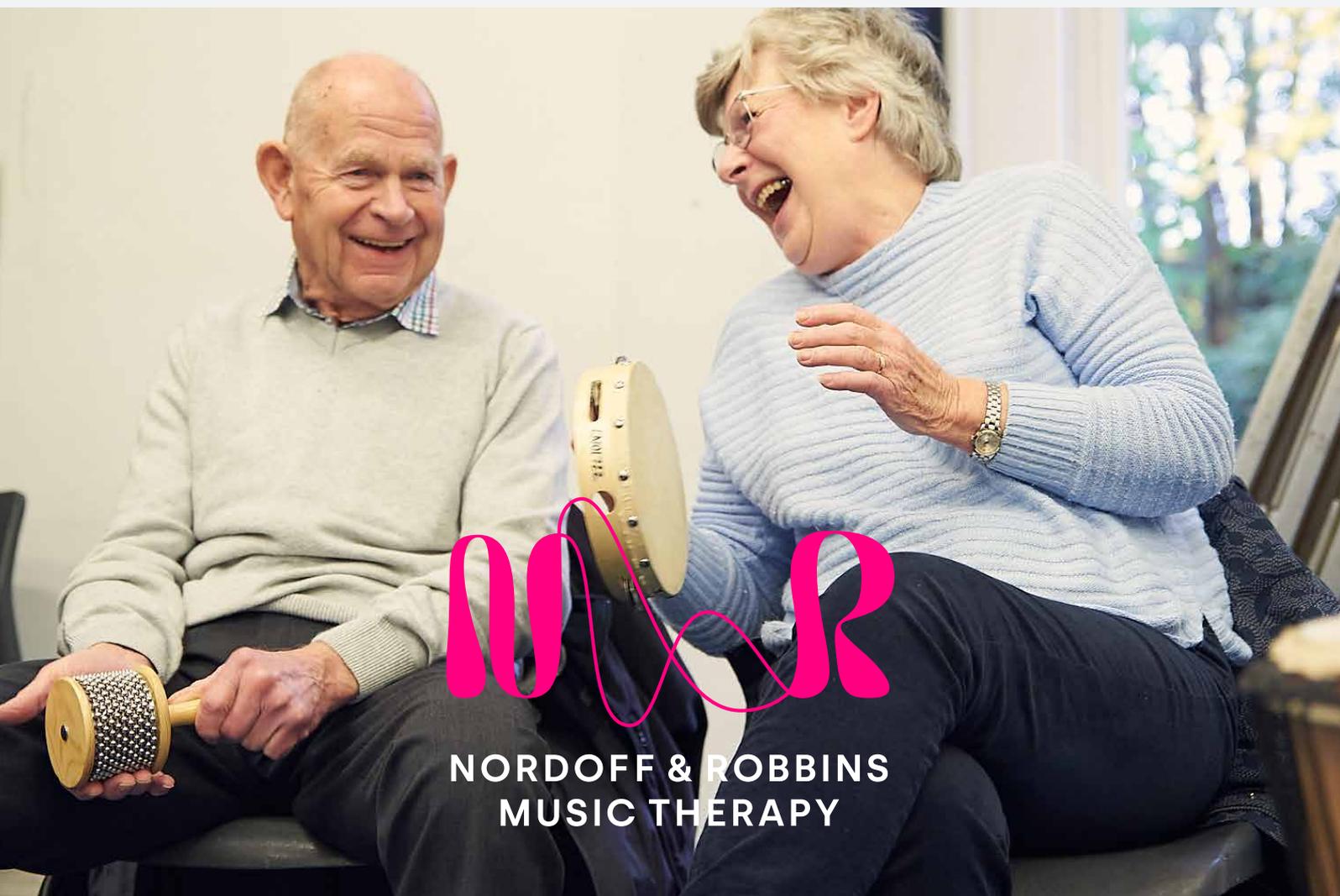


# Using music to support wellbeing when living with dementia

## – tips and activities from Nordoff and Robbins music therapists

Music can be a powerful tool if you're living with dementia. It can help to unlock memories and keep hold of your personal identity. Making music together with others can build connections as well as being a pleasurable activity that supports wellbeing.



NORDOFF & ROBBINS  
MUSIC THERAPY

# Here are some tips from Nordoff and Robbins music therapists for using music to support your wellbeing if you're living with dementia:



- 1** Choose a **musical genre** to explore, one that you can listen to, sing-along to or play. Some examples of genre include popular songs from a particular decade, musicals, folk music etc.
- 2** **Make a playlist** you can sing-along or listen to with others. We recommend using Playlist for Life ([www.playlistforlife.org.uk](http://www.playlistforlife.org.uk)) to help you build the playlist.
- 3** Take time to listen to music from **your past** that is connected to happy memories from your life.
- 4** **Keep discovering new** things by taking some time to listen to music you haven't listened to before.
- 5** If there are young people in your life, take turns to **swap music suggestions** or make a playlist for each other.
- 6** **Move to music** in any way that feels comfortable to you.
- 7** **Join a local choir** or community group that makes music.
- 8** If you're already a musician, make opportunities to **regularly play your instrument** or sing. If you haven't played in a while, you could get your instrument serviced, or have some lessons.
- 9** **Try learning a new instrument.** It helps to keep the brain active and can give you something new to focus on.
- 10** You can use music as a **tool to help your memory.** For example, remind yourself to complete something by the end of a song or album you are listening to for timekeeping. You can also remember the order of activities by making up songs.

# Activities to try with your loved ones



- Talk to a loved one about **which musicians you love** and why.
- Play a track, listening to it with someone else and **talk about the memories** it raises.
- **Make up a song** with someone else.
- **Attend a public performance or concert** with a loved one.



# Building a playlist



Making a playlist together with a loved one is a way for them to understand what music you enjoy. We recommend using **Playlist for Life** ([www.playlistforlife.org.uk](http://www.playlistforlife.org.uk)) to help you build the playlist. To help inspire you about the type of songs you may want to include, here are some suggested genres to explore:

- **Music from your cultural background**
- **Music from your religion or faith**
- **Popular songs from when you were in your teens and twenties**
- **Songs from film soundtracks**
- **Songs from musicals**

Playlist for Life also have a number of playlists you can access:  
<https://open.spotify.com/user/playlistdementia>



# Music services you can access



- **Nordoff and Robbins music therapy:**  
[www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/applying-for-music-therapy/](http://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/applying-for-music-therapy/)
- **Find a music therapist through BAMT:**  
[www.bamt.org/resources/find-a-therapist](http://www.bamt.org/resources/find-a-therapist)
- **Alzheimer's Society Singing for the Brain groups:**  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-dementia-support-services/singing-for-the-brain](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-dementia-support-services/singing-for-the-brain)
- **Age UK:**  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/)
- **Arts for Dementia:**  
[www.artsfordementia.org/events/](http://www.artsfordementia.org/events/)

**Find details of more services on the Nordoff and Robbins website:**  
**[www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/dementia-information-hub](http://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/dementia-information-hub)**

