

Activity and Social Interactions

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The authors of this material were a team of students from Laurentian University. Starting in the winter of 2021, each of them had a role. All of them found activities to help people stay active and stay connected. Together they found images, wrote sections of the text, edited, reviewed, and created the layout of this manual.

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Acknowledgments

During the time of COVID-19, Bruce and Josée felt that the risks of social isolation for seniors would be compounded. One of our projects to address this led to this guide. This work was supported by Mitacs through the Mitacs Accelerate Program (Canada's premiere research internships to Halana Barbosa and Sarah Colton), Finlandia Village and the Finnish Rest Home Society. We are grateful for their support.

This manual would not have been possible without the many contributions of John Lewko, Ph.D. who recently became emeritus professor. Dr Lewko is the founder of the Laurentian Research Institute for Aging (LRIA). **His vision and tireless work brought together everyone across Sudbury and beyond.** We are thankful for all the doors Dr. Lewko opened. His wisdom is priceless.

We would also especially like to thank David Munch, CEO at Finlandia Village. Through his vision researchers will learn from residents and residents will benefit from research. We hope this manual is a first step in this direction.

Preface

It is a well established phenomenon that isolation, lack of social contact, and a reduction in activities has a detrimental effect on a person's wellbeing and mental health. During the time of COVID-19 we felt that the risks of social isolation for seniors would be compounded. We looked for ways to help-to make it easier to connect with others and to find things to do.

Although many seniors are uncomfortable with computers, we are confident that the resources already available over the internet could help them. The internet offers many opportunities for activities and ways to connect with others. In fact, research has shown that one of the best interventions for older adults is to show them how to use electronic devices such as a tablet or a computer. We have written a guide addressing this challenge entitled "Welcome to the Online World."

Once we are comfortable with using the internet, the next challenge is to find the resources which match our interests. That is where this guide comes in. This guide is intended to help people find activities and improve quality of life.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Authors | II |
| Acknowledgments | III |
| Preface | IV |
| Table of Contents | V |
| About this book | VII |
| | |
| Chapter 1 Social Connection | 1 |
| <i>Social Connection</i> | 3 |
| | |
| Chapter 2 Physical Activities | 7 |
| <i>Dancing</i> | 9 |
| <i>Walking</i> | 14 |
| <i>Yoga</i> | 16 |
| <i>Gardening</i> | 18 |
| | |
| Chapter 3 Animals | 21 |
| <i>Bird Watching</i> | 23 |
| <i>Butterfly watching</i> | 26 |
| <i>Pets</i> | 28 |
| | |
| Chapter 4 Games | 32 |
| <i>Playing Cards</i> | 34 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Puzzles and Games</i> | 38 |
| Chapter 5 Arts and Crafts | 42 |
| <i> Colouring</i> | 44 |
| <i> Drawing</i> | 46 |
| <i> Crafting</i> | 49 |
| <i> Knitting and Crocheting</i> | 51 |
| <i> Origami</i> | 54 |
| Chapter 6 Discovering and Learning | 56 |
| <i> Virtual Travel.....</i> | 58 |
| <i> Museums and Art Galleries</i> | 60 |
| <i> Reading Online - eBook</i> | 62 |
| <i> Listen to Music</i> | 64 |
| <i> Learning an Instrument</i> | 67 |
| Chapter 7 Wellness and Writing | 70 |
| <i> Self-Compassion</i> | 72 |
| <i> Laughter</i> | 73 |
| <i> Meditation</i> | 76 |
| <i> Gratitude.....</i> | 79 |
| <i> Journaling</i> | 81 |
| <i> Writing</i> | 85 |
| Conclusion | 88 |

About this book

Dear Seniors, there are great benefits to being active. Active people feel better, live longer, are healthier and are happier. This doesn't just mean exercising. It also means finding activities, hobbies and ways to stay in touch with friends.

We think that this guide can help. The internet has something for everyone and that includes inspiration for how to stay active. This activity guide will give you some ideas on how to get the most out of this new online world!

What will you find inside? It includes some exciting options for keeping your social life active. For example, we talk about different types of online gatherings and activities, such as virtual museums and online dance classes. We have some suggestions on how to travel or explore some places without leaving your home, where to find free books to read, some ideas for crafts, places to learn, and some suggestions to interesting sites.

All of our choices have been included because research has shown that they can help keep people happy and healthy.

If you are not comfortable with the technology, we have a companion guide to help you learn to use your tablet or computer entitled “Welcome to the Online World”. We suggest that you have someone that knows those technologies beside you while you are learning about them. If you encounter difficulties, they will be there to help.

You will see that we have divided the book into themes. Each theme shows just a few ideas the authors felt you might be interested in. Think of the book as a guided tour of possibilities. For each section within a theme is a little bit of writing and some links. These links are places that you can click if you are reading this on a device connected to the internet. This will take you directly to the webpage we thought to recommend. Please click on this [link](#). If it brought you to a publication done by Senior Planet, you did it right!

Since this is not, primarily, a physical book, it is easy to update. We would be very happy if you were to send suggestions for new material, comments on what to remove, and instructions on how to make it more useful.

Bruce and Josée

We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions. Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. She speaks French too.

« No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow your progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying. »

Tony Robbins

Chapter 1 Social Connection



Let's connect!

Older adults face greater risk of social isolation which can lead to loneliness. Studies have shown that loneliness and isolation significantly increase the risk of stroke, heart disease, dementia, and mental health concerns. There are many high-tech (and even non-tech!) ways to keep in touch and maintain your social life.

This chapter is just a gentle reminder about some ways to stay connected even when it is difficult.



Social Connection



Activities to Keep you Socially Connected

- Walk around your neighbourhood; this can be a great physical and social activity. If it is safe, go for a walk with a friendly neighbour.
- Organize an outdoor get-together on a nice sunny day with a few people.
- Talk with family or friends over the phone. Reminisce about old memories and share new ones.
- Take part in an online fitness routine - live streamed or from one of the thousands of fitness YouTube videos.
- Read the Guide “Welcome to the online world” for some advice on how to get started with social media. Communication with others through email, texts, and social platforms such as Facebook, FaceTime, and Zoom, can keep you in touch with friends and family.

Once you get comfortable with a video platform such as FaceTime or Zoom

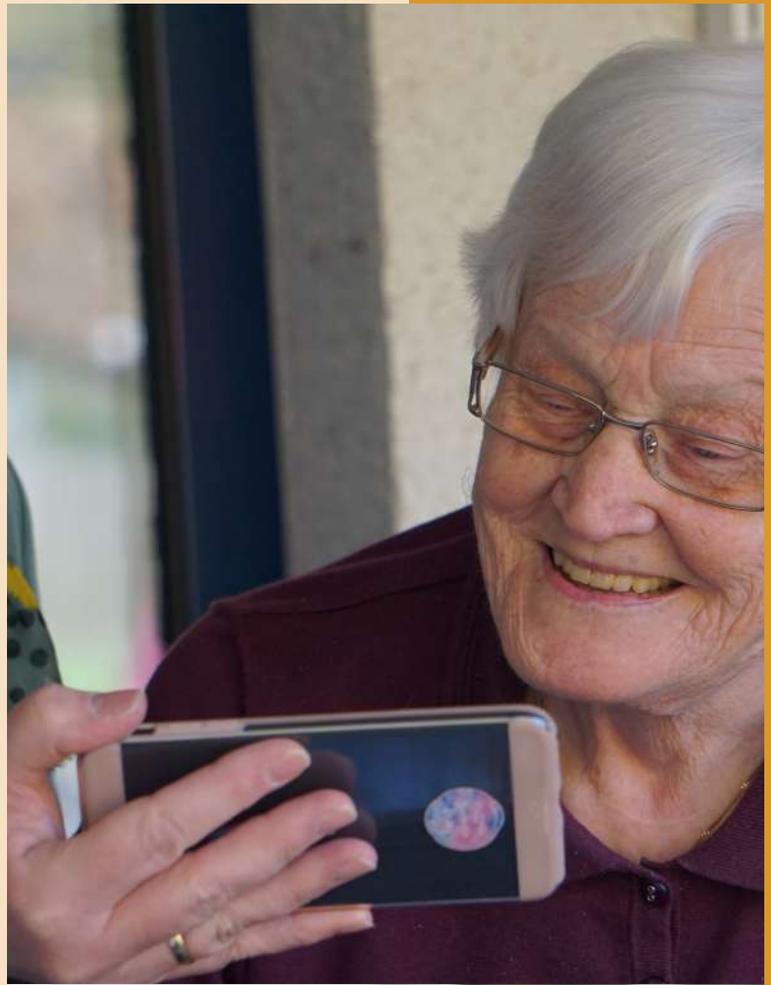
- Host a virtual get-together with friends via a group video chat.
 - Read a book to a grandchild or friend while video chatting with him/her.
 - Play cards online with friends (see chapter 4).
 - Eat a meal while you are video chatting with your friends.
- Join a club, a group of your interest online or in person (for example, a book club, a [knitting club](#) or another club). To find a virtual club, 1) open a browser like Google chrome, type key words like 'virtual reading club' or 'online reading club', 2) search on [meetup](#). On this website, you might have register, indicate your goal, the activities you like or you might be able to search directly. Another option is to 3) search a club on [Facebook](#). 4) ask public library.



- Become a volunteer online or in person. To be a volunteer can have numerous benefits to you ([read the resources on this page](#)).
 - “Put free time to good use
 - Meet new people
 - Cultivate personal growth
 - Gain new experience
 - Take on new challenges
 - Get new perspective on your own problems
 - Feel good and build self-esteem
 - Take pride in sharing your knowledge and abilities
 - Keep your body and mind active
 - Stay healthy and have fun!”

Interested? [Read this brochure](#), it gives good advice. You can volunteer from home, online or in person. Visit [volunteer.ca](#), search an organization you like on internet, in local newspapers or radio stations.

- Have a talent or a skill? You could teach others your skills by holding a virtual class! You could teach live by using zoom for instance or you can record videos with a phone, a tablet or a computer and post them online (you might need help to do those steps).





- Loneliness can be as dangerous to your health as smoking or abusing alcohol. If you know someone who might be lonely, why not call them?

General Tips to Prevent Loneliness

- Staying connected with others. If face to face is not possible, learn how to use social media or video chat (Zoom, Facetime, or others).
- Writing letters: whether the old fashioned kind or using electronic means (email, messenger, etc...)
- Planning a schedule of activities, tasks, etc.
- Giving back to others brings happiness, whether you just find a way to help the people around you or you make it more official.



Josée's mother knit newborn hats and blankets and donate them to hospitals. She is so proud of what she has done. Volunteering gives her a greater sense of satisfaction and growth. It feels good to help others.

Chapter 2

Physical

Activities



☞ Online Dancing

☞ Yoga

☞ Walking

☞ Gardening

Let's be active!

Daily physical activity helps to keep us independent by preventing disease, improving mental health, and keeping us sharp. It keeps us healthy and happy – just like staying connected, learning new things, and keeping time to be relaxed.



Dancing



Do you love to dance?

Dance can help keep your mind sharp and your body healthy. There are dances for everyone - it can be adapted to any age, culture, or disability. Some dances work your memory and keep you sharp, others just let you express yourself to music you like.

How good is it for you? Dancing has been shown to improve flexibility, balance, cognitive ability, and muscle strength. It helps control blood

pressure, high cholesterol, and keeps your heart in good shape. It can help reduce muscle and joint pain, improve coordination, minimize anxiety, stress and depression as well as slow the onset of dementia.

How can the online world help? There are many places online to either teach (or remind you) how to dance, to find music, or to do line dancing.

- [Seniors Resource Center Line Dance](#) This video presents how good and fun it could be to dance.

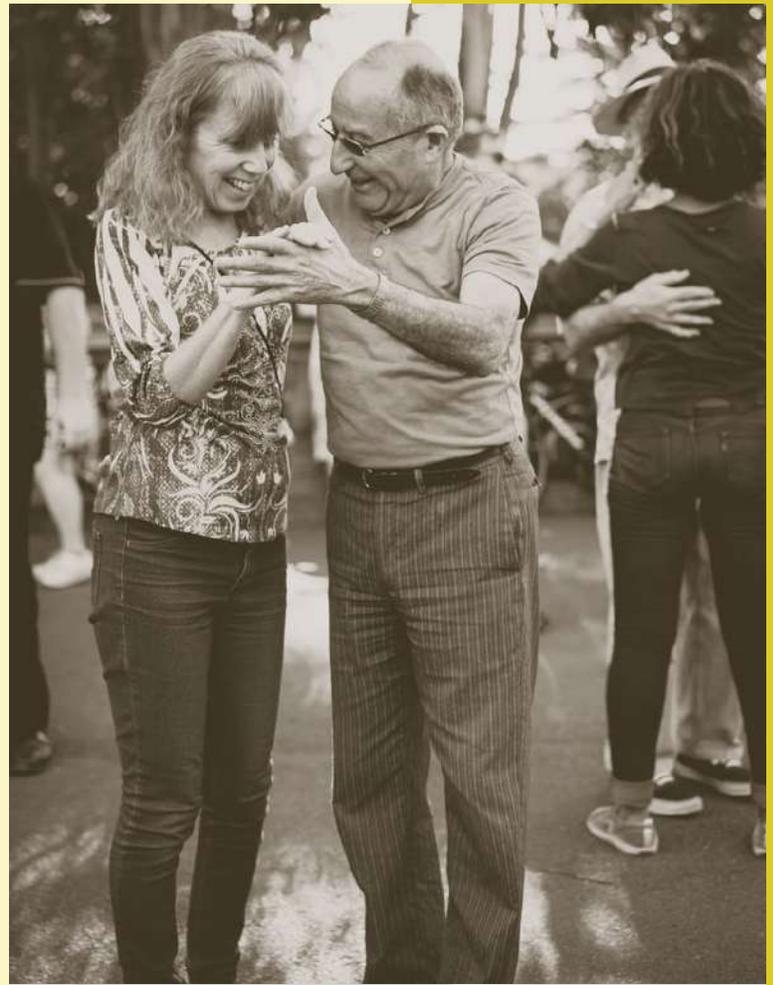
Don't be put off by the idea of line dancing, many of the dances you know have been adapted to line dancing.

Safety tips: Contact your doctor to make sure that dancing is an activity that you can engage in. Remember to take breaks, have some water handy and wear shoes or be bare foot.

Don't have a dance partner? Not to worry, you don't need one! Whether you need to keep a social distance or are living on your own, the online world offers countless and easy to access online dancing options to help you stay connected, active, and have fun at the same time.

There are many videos so you can find a style you like: line dance, free style dance, zumba dance, ballet dance and much more.

You can also search for any dance style you want. If you are having trouble, please refer to the guide 'Welcome to the online world'.



Line dances

Some dances from Michael & Michele

- [Jersey Boys](#)
- [When you smile](#)
- [Rolling Rhythm](#)

For more from them, click on [Michael & Michele](#) If you scroll down, you will find a list of dances.

1) Select a dance you want to learn. They have dances for beginners, intermediates & improvers.

2) On the left side of the screen a list of steps to learn. Often, you will have videos displayed on the right side of the screen.

3) To learn the dance, click on a TEACH video. Enjoy!

4) To dance with the music and follow the steps, click on a DEMO video.

Here are some other dances:

- [Saddle Brook Senior Line Dancing Class](#) The instructor teaches a dance followed by the dance with music.
- [Line dances for Seniors and Beginner](#) Same principle: teaching followed by dancing with music. It's 40 min.: Electric Slide, Cupide Shuffle, and more! Sound is not perfect.
- [Mambo Sourire](#) Instruction followed by demo. In French.





- [I like your soul Line Dance Instruction](#) created by Jill Weiss.
 - [I like your soul Line Dance Demo](#) Dance with music.
 - [Sand Line Dance Instruction](#)
 - [Sand Line Dance Demo](#)
- For more from her, click on [Jill Weiss](#).

Ballet for everybody

Canada's National Ballet School
Sharing Dance 2021

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Intro | Part C |
| Part A | Part D |
| Part B | Full |
| Chorus | Full adv |

Dansons Ensemble 2020

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Part 1 | Part 5 |
| Part 2 | Part 6 |
| Part 3 | Full |
| Part 4 | Full&music |

To have a translation, click on , then on , then on sous-titre, then traduire automatiquement, select the language of your choice.

Dances live!

With COVID-19, some instructors offer live classes on zoom.

[Michael and Michele](#)

You will see the zoom classes on the left side of the page. Voluntary donation for each class.

[Jill Weiss](#) Scroll down you will see the classes offered. 7\$ per class.

To find more options

- 1) Open a browser (such as Google Chrome),
- 2) type key words like dance classes on zoom and click on what you are interested in. Read carefully about the cost.

Exercises



From dances to exercises

These are dance based exercise routines to help stay healthy and happy.

- [Dance Fit for Over 60s – Online class #1](#) You dance while seating all the time. Created by a dance company.
- [Dance Fit for Over 60s – Online class #2](#) You dance while seating and then standing.
- [Central YMCA](#) does have numerous videos of exercises for older adults. Click to see a list of videos available.
- [Zumba Gold for Older Adults and Beginners](#) This is one example in the Zumba Gold series.
- [25-minute Chair-Based Spinal Mobility Routine for Older Adults](#) This is one example of videos from the Chair-Based Workouts for Older Adults series.
- [Senior Fitness with Meredith](#) She has many fitness videos for seniors - one good example:
- [Senior Fitness – Low Impact Salsa Dance](#)

Walking



Did you know that being active helps you deal with stress and worry? Walking has been shown to improve sleep, slow down mental decline, and even lower your risk for Alzheimer's disease. Walking can also help you improve your circulation, strengthen your bones, and, if this is a goal of yours, lose weight.

You might know about this. Just a refresher about safety...

1) The most important component when you walk is to make sure you are stable and have good traction. A first step is to find good walking shoes or boots. They need to have an excellent grip and to stabilize your ankles.

- [Hiking and Trekking poles](#)

2) Many people find that hiking poles add some confidence for walking, especially in winter or where the ground is uneven.

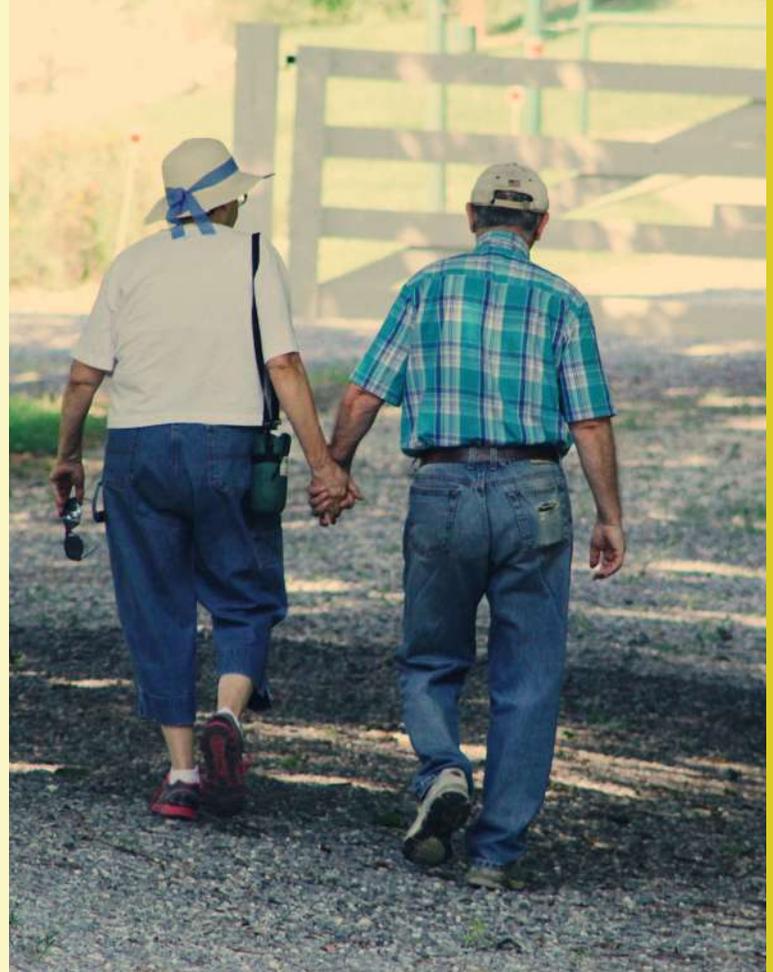
3) In the winter (ice or snow), you can take steps to be safer.

This article has some suggestions:

- [7 Hacks to make your boots slip-proof](#) One option is to buy ice grips and install them before you go for a walk. But if it is too slippery, it might be better to avoid going for a walk that day.

4) Don't forget to bring water with you, drink, and take it easy.

5) For your own safety, please choose the trail that is right for you. To ensure the utmost safety, go at your own pace, and refrain from trying to keep up with others.



Some people we know have drop foot; because of that they chose trails that are rather flat (no rocks to climb on). They don't want to take the chance to fall. But still they walk at least once and sometimes 3 times a day! In the winter, they love the ice grips they have added to their boots.

Yoga



Yoga is an Indian way to harmonize the mind, body, and spirit. It involves meditation, breathing exercises, and movement exercises.

The physical side of yoga - called hatha yoga - consists of some slow exercises and postures, many of which can be adapted for seniors. Yoga, as with other exercise, can lower the risks of cardiovascular disease and reduce arthritis, pain, and inflammation. It also increases sleep quality and

quality of life. Additionally, yoga can lead to improve your ability to soothe yourself, develop your self-awareness and improve your social functioning.

Where: Thankfully, you can do yoga from the comfort of your own home! When the weather is right you can do yoga outdoors as well.

How can the online world help? There are many free lessons and demonstrations available to help you get started.



Follow-Along Yoga Videos

- [Yoga for Seniors – Slow and Gentle Yoga](#)
- [Full Length Gentle Yoga Class for Beginners and Seniors](#)
- [Chair Yoga – Yoga for Seniors](#)
- [Standing Yoga for Seniors](#)
- [Yoga for Flexibility](#)

Yoga apps

Check out these free apps for some amazing yogic experiences! You will need to go to the App store (Apple) or the Android store (Android) to find them.

Yoga for Beginners Mind + Body:

This app allows for you to create your own workouts sessions. It includes visual instructions on how to do the yoga poses.

Simply Yoga: With this yoga app you can choose how long you would like your session to be, and then the program will guide you in your yoga poses from there.

Track Yoga: This app features an awesome program that allows you to unlock content the more you practice yoga.

Gardening



«To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul »

Alfred Austin

Gardening, especially outdoors, can help you get exercise, burn calories, and strengthen your muscles. You will need to bend, squat, stretch, and pull in your outdoor space. But all at your own speed. And a few hours of exposure to sunshine will boost your vitamin D levels!

Gardening is also stress-reducing. It preserves hand-eye coordination - keeping brain and

body in sync. It may also decrease your risk of developing dementia.

Here are some suggestions to make gardening easier.

- [Gardening tips for seniors](#)
- [Easier gardening for seniors](#)

If you have never gardened before, consider reading the how-to guides below:

- [How to start a garden – 10 steps to gardening for beginners](#)
- [Follow these 10 steps to start your first garden off right](#)



Your first step is to decide on whether you'd like to garden indoors, outdoors or both. You might think that gardening **outdoors** is not a possibility because you live in an apartment, a condo or a residence for seniors. Make sure you ask, because many places are happy to have an additional person to help. Your residence may even provide a new garden bed where you (and your neighbours) can grow what you want.

While many gardening activities are done outdoors, you can grow some kinds of flowers, herbs, plants and vegetables indoors. The type of plants you can have depends on the sun you have in your home. But there is a plant for every situation!

- [Indoor gardening ideas for seniors](#)
- [How to start an indoor garden the right way](#)
- [Super-easy houseplants you will love](#)
- [Air purifying plants: 20 of the best for your home](#) To clear the air you can choose some air purifying plants.

A garden needs looking after; it needs care but it also gives back. Every day you can go and see how your plants are doing. Each new bud, leaf and flower are the result of your good care!

We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte

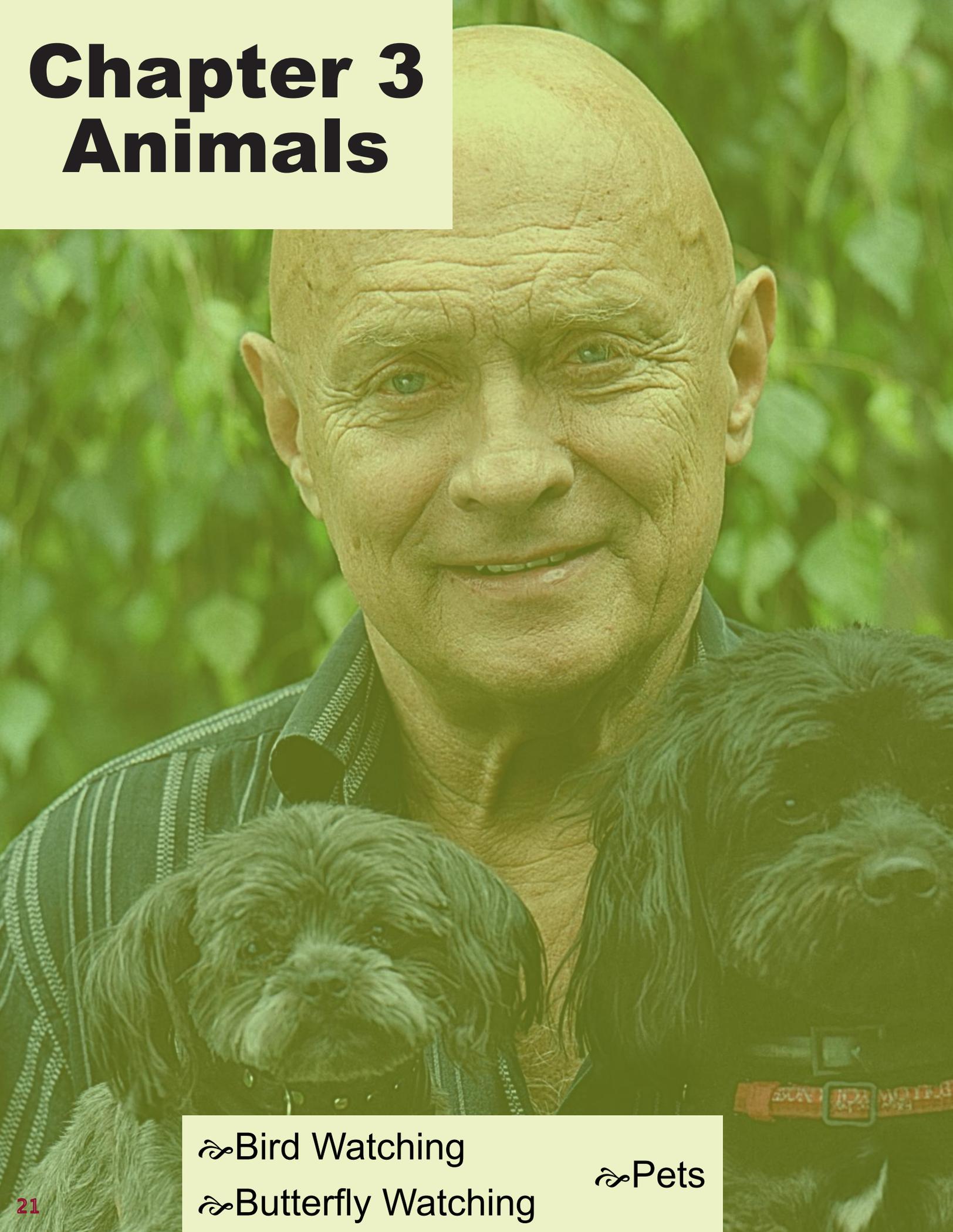
Safety precautions for outdoor gardening

Gardening can be a lot of fun. It might be a good idea to wear a hat with a large brim, long-sleeves and/or sunscreen. You can also use a kneeling pad. As time will fly... don't forget that it's better to garden more often with shorter periods of time than one long gardening session. Your back and your knees will thank you! Any gardener needs this lesson repeated many times.



Chapter 3

Animals



☞ Bird Watching

☞ Butterfly Watching

☞ Pets

Enjoy Animals

Cute animals can bring a smile to almost anyone's face! If you're able to have your own, pets are a great way to keep active and happy. Visiting a friend or family member with a fuzzy companion is also a great option.

Enjoying animals is not only limited to our indoor pets. Go outside to watch your neighbourhood birds and butterflies as well. You may even be lucky and spot some rare wildlife!

If you live a bit further from nature, or just want to see some more exotic animals, there are many online live cams where you can watch wildlife.



Bird Watching



Did you know that there are an estimated 18 000 different kinds of birds? Birdwatching is an activity that can mean many different things for different people. For some it means watching the birds that come to the windows of your house. For others, it means watching birds in nature or it may mean traveling to try and find a specific kind of bird.

[All about birds](#) is filled with information about birds. Click on the link and enjoy!

Online Live Bird Watching

Not sure about leaving the comfort of your own home? Not to worry! Check out these awesome webcam links that allow you to view birds right from where you are!

- [All About Birds](#) : you can watch birds in a natural environment.
- [Mango Link Cam](#) is linked to hundred of live streaming webcams around the world. You can see what is happening at zoos, wildlife parks, farms, reefs and wildlife locations in Africa.



With Mango Link Cam, you can also watch birds, mammals, pets, aquatic life, reptiles and insects, including butterflies.

Bird bath and bird feeder

What better way to do some birdwatching than to invite them to your backyard or your window? A few options are to hang a bird house or bird feeder on a hook beside your window or using a branch near by. You can even add a bird bath to your garden area. Ensure you are feeding the birds the proper food for their species ([Canadian Wildlife](#)

[Federation](#)). Please be mindful of other animals in the area.

As a craft project, you could create your own bird feeder and your own bird bath.

- [Water Bottle Bird Feeder](#) This video shows how to turn a disposable water bottle into a bird feeder.
- [10 Easy DIY Birdbath](#) Ideas to make your own bird bath.
- [5 Simple DIY Bird Feeders Older Adults Can Create](#) Instructions for 5 DIY bird feeders! On the next page, you can see the materials that are required for each bird feeder.



1. Peanut Butter Pine Cone Feeder

All you need for this bird feeder is a pine cone, some yarn or twine.

2. Orange Peel Feeder

A few slices of grapefruit and/or oranges can be attractive to birds!

3. Sliced Bread Feeder

Some peanut butter, a couple of leftover slices of bread, and some birdseed are an invitation.

4. Threaded Cereal Feeder

Thread some shaped cereal onto twine/ribbon/yarn and attach it where

you wish with some pipe cleaners or string.

5. Homemade Suet Feeder

Mix some peanut butter, shortening, bird seed, and cornmeal into a mesh bag and tie with twine.



At the cottage, the first thing Bruce's father would do was to fill up the bird feeders with seeds. We could then often see blue jays and chickadees

Butterfly watching



Being outdoors or even just watching nature can help us feel better. Through spring and summer a nature walk or even a window is all you need to try butterfly watching.

[How to Attract Butterflies: 17 tips](#) and [Canadian Nature](#) are filled with information about butterflies. They tell you what to do to attract butterflies to your yard and present pictures of the 10 favorites butterflies in Northern America.

Creating a Butterfly Garden

- **Fruit**

A little fruit can bring the butterflies to you. Remember to choose fruits that are juicy and to put out new fruit daily!

They are likely to come for:

Oranges, Watermelon

Mushy bananas, Grapefruits

Strawberries, Peaches

Kiwi, Apples, Mangos

...you may even want to eat breakfast with them!

- **Plants**

If you are gardening or have a place for plants, choose some plants that attract butterflies. Here are some easy plants that attract butterflies:

*Salvia (sage), Zinnia, Tithonia
Butterfly bush, Lantana,
Lupine
Phlox, Milkweed, Daisy, Aspers*

- **Puddling spot and flat stones**

Butterflies drink from a damp soil or a mud puddle. It would help to attract them if you create a puddling spot and add some flat stones where they can get warmth.

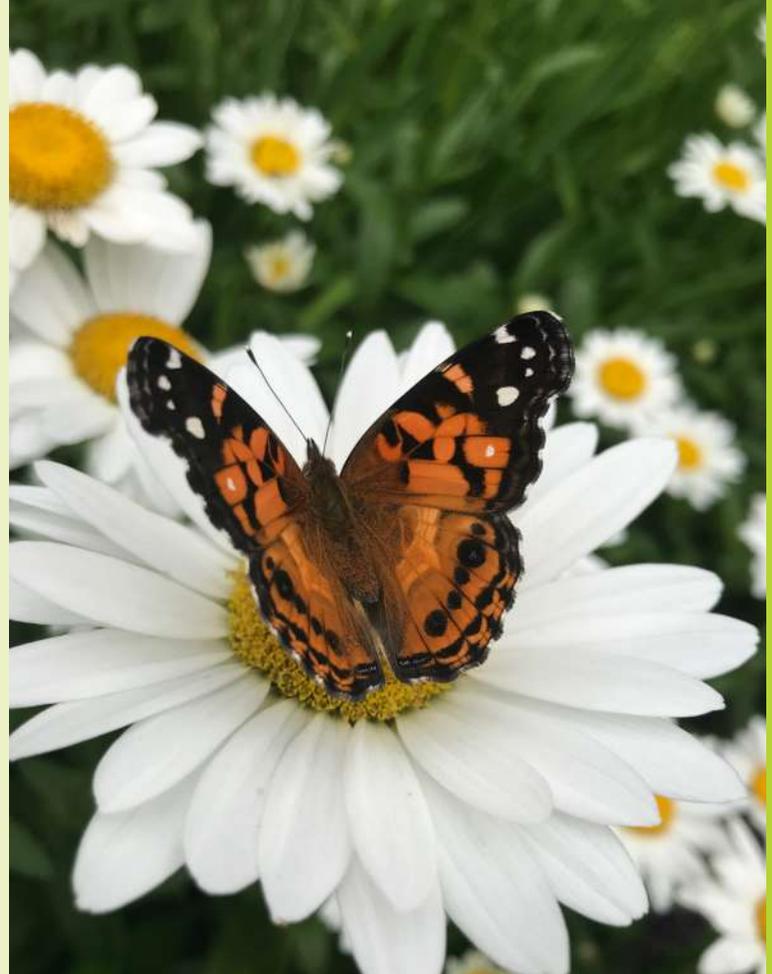
- **Birdbath with marbles**

They can lend on marbles (partially in water) and drink.

Butterfly-Viewing Online

Don't have a garden but still want to watch butterflies ? Not a problem, check out the links below to watch live viewings of butterflies!

- [The Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory](#)
- [Florida Museum - Canopy Cam](#)
- [Mango Link Cam](#)



Pets



You may think that living in a residence or apartment may prevent you from having or visiting a pet. Though there may be restrictions on the types of animals you can have, pets can come in many shapes and sizes. A pet fish or other small animal may be allowed. Many retirement homes also have “shared” animals- such as cats or dogs. This is a great opportunity to experience the benefits of having a loving pet without all the work!

Benefits of Having a Pet

- Associated with lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Decreases loneliness, increases opportunities to socialize
- Increases physical activity, helps you keep a routine



Having a dog has been great for Bruce and Josée's. Very active, Apolo keeps us moving (see pictures in introduction and next page).

Types of Pets

There are many options for you to choose from if you want a pet. How long the animal lives, the amount of daily work and cleaning, cost of upkeep and vet bills and exercise requirements are all important considerations before adopting a pet. If you decide to get a pet, a good first step is to visit a local animal shelter for adoptable animal. Many shelters have more than just cats and dogs available.

Here is a list of animals you may want to consider:

Dogs, cats, birds, rabbits

Fish, hamsters, guinea pigs

Mice and rats, lizards

As a quick note, please check with your local municipality about pet restrictions before adopting!



 To the left you can see Apolo, our Spanish Water Dog. He gives a lot of love to everyone in the family.

Ways to Interact with Pets

Here are some other options:

1. Visit a friend or family member who has a pet you enjoy. This is a great way to see a furry friend but also spend time with someone you care about.

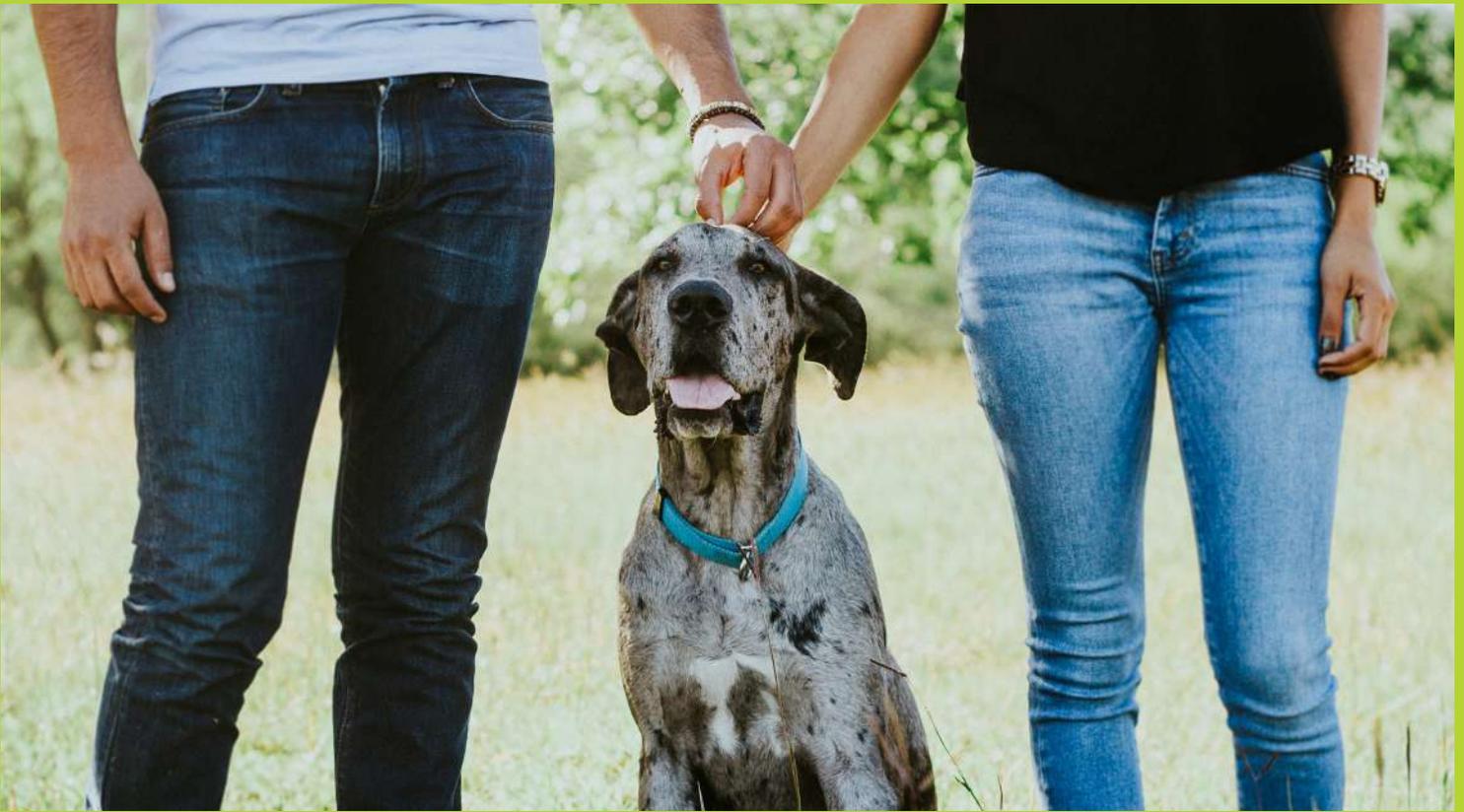
2. Ask to see if your apartment building/ residence could get involved in a local pet therapy program. Volunteers and their friendly pets come visit the common areas of your residence. This is a great no-responsibility alternative to having your own pet.

3. Sometimes retirement residences will have “communal” pets. These pets would usually be taken care of by the staff members and residents.

Ask to see if your residence already has a communal pet or would be interested.



Finlandia Village has
birds, cats and fish.
Residents love their
company.



Animal and fish

Videos or Live Cam Online

- [Toronto zoo](#)
- [Ripley Aquarium](#)
- [New England Aquarium](#)
- [Explore Live Cam](#)
- [Mango Link Cam](#)

The above links let you watch livestreams - video feeds over the internet. This is just a beginning, there are many livestreams of cute animals available - both pets and animals at zoos. This way you can get your animal-fix without having to leave your house.

 One student in our team of authors used to regularly bring her dog to Finlandia Village. She and her dog would visit everyone who requested it. The seniors could spend time with the lovely dog: petting, holding, talking to him.

They loved it.

Chapter 4 Games



♣ Playing Cards

♣ Puzzles and Games

Let's Get Your Mind in Motion!

Games are excellent options to enhance spirit, stay mentally active, activates memories and have fun. Besides, playing cards and board games increase social interactions and happiness.

Check the next sections of this chapter for a few ideas.

Let's have fun!



Playing Cards



Playing cards can be great exercise for your brain. It is especially good for memory and can improve mood, reduce stress, and boost your immune system! It may delay the onset of dementia symptoms.

This activity is also easily adaptable to your physical needs. It can help you keep your fine motor skills.

All you need is a flat surface, some cards, and anyone who wants to play!

How can the online world help? Below we give you some links to instructions for some popular games, and then links to sites and apps to help you play when you are on your own.



If you don't have a group to play with: you might want to consider asking around or even make a flyer to invite others. You might find neighbours that love cards and have hours of fun playing with them.



Cards Game Instructions

Numerous cards games exist! On the following lines, you will find links that will guide you to the following games if you need to learn or review the instructions: Spades, Euchre, Pitch, Hearts, Whist, Rummy 500, Pinochle, Oh Hell, Bridge, and Hasenpfeffer. Chose the one you like and let the fun begin.

- [How to play 99](#)
- [How to play Big Two](#)
- [How to play Bridge](#)
- [How to play Canasta](#)
- [How to play Cribbage](#)
- [How to play Euchre](#)
- [How to play Hasenpfeffer](#)
- [How to play Hearts](#)
- [How to play I Doubt It/ Cheat](#)
- [Video on how to play I Doubt It](#)
- [How to play Pinochle](#)
- [How to play Pitch](#)
- [How to play Rummy 500](#)
- [How to play Spades by two partnerships](#)
- [How to play UNO](#)
- [Video on how to play UNO](#)
- [How to play Whist](#)



Playing Cards Online

You can also play card games online. You can play alone, with the computer (or tablet), with friends, or even with people from around the world. Below, you will find links to some online card games.

- [Hearts, Spades, 3-5-8, Pinochle, Euchre, 29, and Gin Rummy](#)
- [Spades, Euchre, Pitch, Hearts, Whist, 500, Pinochle, Oh Hell, and Bridge](#)

For some games you can choose the people you are playing with.

 During COVID, Josée's parents played cards online with their teenage grandchildren.

They used the site *trickstercards*, choosing their partners and talked together over the phone at the same time. They had a lot of fun! If they had no one, they were given partners.

Solitaire Online

You want to play on your own? No problem! Many online games are designed just for that.

- Addiction, Canfield, Classic, Crescent, Daily, Forty Thieves, Free Cell, Golf, Klondike, Mahjonn, Pyramid, Spider, Tri Peaks [solitaire Online Game](#)

This website offers many free online games (not just cards).



A number of lovely memories come to mind when Josée thinks of games.

Her maternal grand-parents loved to play cards. She can still hear her grandmother laughing when playing cards.

At her parents' cottage, she would often play cards with her dear uncle Guy and her aunt Annette. Guy was an amazing player!

When her paternal grand-father was still alive, Josée would play the game called memory with him. What fun they had!

Playing games is such a great way to interact with people you love.



Puzzles and Games



Do you want to go even further into the stimulation of your brain? Why not try your hand at some new puzzles and games? Or play some time-old favourites!

[Puzzles and games stimulate your brain](#) and promote mental flexibility. They may even help reverse cognitive decline. This is especially true for activities requiring complex problem solving, a high degree insight, originality, or thought.

A few games to try (the link will explain how to play):

- [Bingo](#)

- [Backgammon](#)
- Bean toss game
- Board games (monopoly)
- [Boggle](#)
- [Chess video1 video2](#)
- Crossword puzzle
- [Domino](#)
- Personalized Puzzles
- Petanque
- Pichenottes (carrom)
- [Scrabble](#)
- Settlers of Catan
- [Sudoku video](#)
- Ticket to Ride
- Wizard
- Word search puzzle

To play with others (not face to face), everybody reproduce the pieces' movements of all players. This could be done with Scrabble, Monopoly and Chess.



Personalized Jigsaw Puzzles

Create your own puzzle and have it delivered to you (unfortunately not free)

Steps:

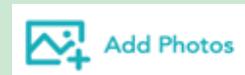
1. Search <https://www.shutterfly.com>
2. Find **Search**
type “**photo gallery puzzle**”.



3. Click on **ONE** puzzle.
4. On the right-hand side of the screen, **click** on the puzzle size of your choice (60, 252, 520, or 1014 pieces).
5. On the right-hand side of the screen, select the orange button labeled “personalize”.



6. On the left-hand side of the screen, select the “1 photo” option (red square)
7. Select “Add Photos” at the bottom of the screen

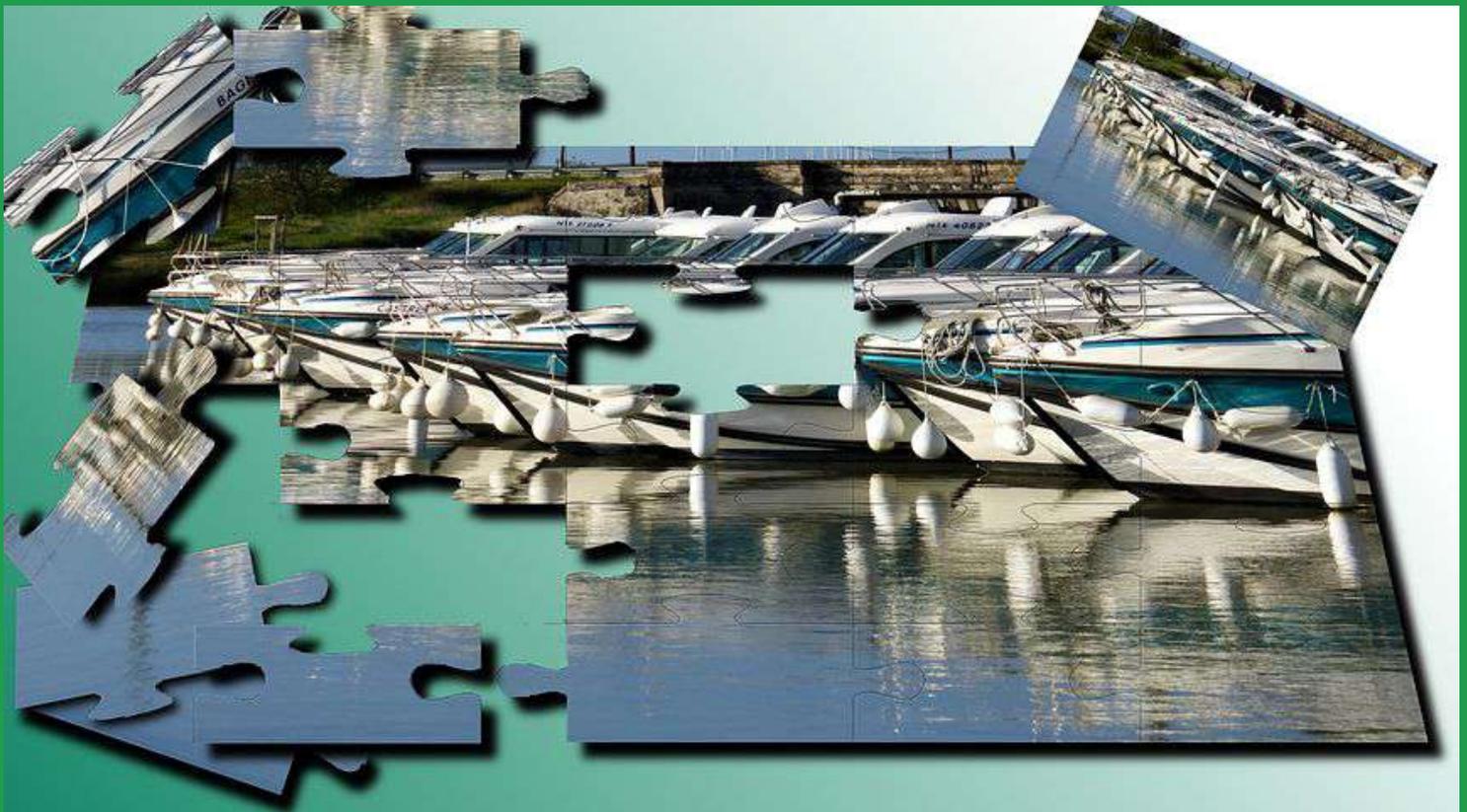


8. A pop-up will come up. Select upload.
9. On your device, find the image you want and click on this file.
10. Press “open”
11. On the website, select your image on the bottom of the page
12. Drag the image to the puzzle area



13. Select “Add to cart” in the top right corner.





14. Select **Sign up** and complete the questions.

Don't have an account? [Sign up](#)

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Confirm Email Address

Password

Confirm Password

By clicking Sign up you agree to Shutterstock's Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. In addition, you will be subscribed to receive exclusive email offers.

Yes, please send me special offers

SIGN UP

15. Select “Proceed to checkout”.

PROCEED TO CHECKOUT

16. Enter your shipping and payment information.

17. Select “Order”.

ORDER

This could be a great gift idea.

Online Puzzles and Games

Numerous games are available online.

[Brain curls](#) : free; memory, logic and math questions.

[Brain teasers & games](#) for adults of any age: free; different cognitive aspects; their is more on the main website [Sharpbrains](#); press on the game you want to play; press on play; press on ▶ ; wait then press on skip ad; depending on the game you can choose the level of difficulty; once the game is started you can stop the music, etc. Some of these games can be downloaded on your device which would make them easy to access

- [Bingo](#)
- [Crossword Puzzles, Printable Online Game](#)
- [Strategy, Brain, Words, Maths, Crossword, Puzzles, Sudoku, Board, Hidden Objects, Racing, Poker, Arcade, Jigsaws, Match3, Casino, Spelling and Memory games.](#)
- [Sudoku Online Game](#)
- [Daily Crossword](#)

Downloadable Brain Training Games Apps on Tablets

- Peak
- Elevate
- Lumosity - (not free)

 We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. She speaks French too.



Chapter 5 Arts and Crafts



- ≈ Colouring
- ≈ Drawing
- ≈ Crafting

- ≈ Knitting and Crocheting
- ≈ Origami

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Let's be Creative!

Arts and crafts let you express yourself; sometimes better than words. Over time, we tend to put aside activities such as colouring, drawing, and knitting for the demands of family and the working world, and forget how pleasant it is.

Hopefully this chapter can inspire you to pick up an old activity or try something new. Most of all, have fun and let your imagination flow!



Colouring



Children's activity? Says who! Colouring is considered a therapeutic activity for people of all ages. It can bring you peace and a great amount of enjoyment.

Colouring can help relieve stress and reduce agitation. It's a great outlet for creative minds and personal self-expression. It has also been shown to improve mood, concentration, and problem solving skills.

Coloring is also great for your dexterity and hand-eye

coordination. Colouring can be done anywhere, alone or in group. This can be rewarding social pastime.

Printable Colouring Pages

Here are some links that will guide you to printable coloring pages. Have fun!!

- [Free Adult Coloring Pages](#)
- [Colouring Pages for Adults](#)
- [Paint the World Super Coloring](#)
- [Monday Mandalas](#)
- [Holiday's Coloring Pages](#)

Online colouring Pages

- [Forest Coloring Pages Printable](#)



Just before a holiday, a group of graduate students in psychology challenged each other. The best colouring of a teddy bear was going to win a surprise! We all went to our desks with the same printed image. We applied ourselves. Then, we all came back together and presented our masterpieces. Josée's friend, Caroline, won 1st place with her classic looking teddy bear. Josée 'won' last place with a more colourful version Ah well! It gave us a good laugh.

If you are tech-savvy there are plenty of colouring apps available for cellphones and tablets. Many of these apps are free! Here are three names of apps you can download:

- Adult Coloring Book
- Mandala Coloring for Adults
- Stress Relief Adult Color Book

Online colouring is easier if you use a pencil that works with your tablet (for instance the Apple Pencil for iPads).



Drawing



While many believe drawing is a talent that you're either born with or aren't, drawing, like any skill, can be learnt at any age.

Drawing can be the perfect activity if you're looking to fill some time. It breeds creativity and can help you express yourself. When it goes well it is an accomplishment, and when it doesn't you can work on your

sense of humour and patience. and improve your self-esteem.

Drawing, like many of our suggestions, can be good for your brain and make you feel better as well.

Are you ready to try but don't draw well? Start with this TED talk on how fast you could learn something new!

- [The first 20 hours -- how to learn anything](#)

Online drawing tutorial

There are many drawing tutorials available online.

- [Paul Priestley At Tutorials Online](#)

On this page, you will find many tutorials : how to draw a person, a simple object, a bird flying, etc. We include one series. He just added a tutorial on [watercolour painting!](#)

Start Drawing : A Series

- [PART 1 - Outlines, Edges, Shading](#)
- [PART 2 - Draw a Watering Can using Shape](#)
- [PART 3 – Draw a child's bear using shape](#)
- [PART 4 - Understanding Eye Level](#)
- [PART 5 - Start Drawing: Create distance in a Landscape](#)

Tutorials by other authors

- [How to Draw Hyper Realistic Eyes | Step by Step](#)
- [How to Shade with pencil for beginners](#)



More Art Resources

- [365 Days of Art: A Creative Exercise for Every Day of the Year](#)
- [Best Watercolour Channels on YouTube](#) Alan Owen, Shibasaki, Andrew Geeson, Cheap Joe's, Ev Hales, Harusaki Watercolor, Gary Tucker, Grant Fuller, etc.
- [Top 10 Photography Youtube Channels](#) to improve your skills: Jessica Kobeissi, Thomas Heaton, Sean Tucker, Jamie Windsor, etc.



Art takes different forms. Some love acrylic or watercolor painting. Others prefer carving, sculpting, crafting, working with clay, sewing, quilting, photography, and more!

Music, whether singing or, playing an instrument is also very good for us. Many people also try writing. The best arts for you are the ones you are ready to try.

We only provide a few suggestions to help you get going.



Crafting



Looking to boost your creativity and your cognitive skills? Why not try crafting? It can help keep you active, good for body and mind. It works your memory and so might reduce the risk of dementia.

Don't worry, you don't have to craft alone. In fact, making crafts is an excellent way to bring friends and family together. Have fun with your grandkids making holiday crafts, cards or bookmarks. All you need is a set

of inexpensive material and a bit of imagination. Take a look at our crafting ideas and let your imagination flow. Other crafting ideas can be just a simple, or can be a « project » that you enjoy for a long time.

Crafting Ideas

How can the online world help? There are many sites full of ideas, and many with instructions that can help. See the next pages for some links to get you started.



- [Fabric book cover](#)
- [Fabric scrap ladybug magnets](#)
- [Birthday cards](#)
- [Terrarium – mini Garden](#)
- [Tissue paper flowers](#)
- [Wind chimes](#)
- [Build a birdhouse](#)
- [Photo collage memory board](#)
- [Photo magnets](#)
- [Felt fortune cookies](#)
- [The Spruce Crafts](#) has numerous choices of do it yourself « DIY » projects, the paper crafts, in the hobbies and in the section called More: scrapbooking, making jewelry, woodworking, pottery, etc.

 We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. She speaks French too.



Knitting and Crocheting



The best way to keep your brain sharp is to regularly challenge it – knitting can be just what you need.

Crafts and hobbies have been proven to give many benefits. Knitting works brain and body together, and can be done on or own or with others. You can create something cozy and beautiful (or practical) for yourself or someone you love! More complicated projects will give a real feeling of accomplishment.

How can the online world help? It may make it easier to find ideas, patterns, or, if needed, instructions.

It is never too late to learn something new or start practicing again!

Videos on how to

- [How to knit: Easy for Beginners RJ Knit](#) has a youtube channel of videos on how to knit different projects

Ideas and patterns

- [Ravelry online website](#) Ravelry is a free website for knitters, crocheters, and fiber artists. On this site, you can find a lot of knitting patterns (some are free, some are paid for). You can also create your own knitting patterns and put them on there. But regardless, anything you make, you can post pictures of and share it with other knitters and crocheters, drawing inspiration from them.
- [Bev's Country Cottage: projects for seniors](#) Patterns to make items people in Nursing Homes, Nursing Center or Shelters might need.
 - Socks/ slippers, Gloves
 - Shawls, Wheel Chair Totes
 - Fidget Blankets, etc.
- [The Spruce Crafts NeedleCrafts](#) The Spruce Crafts Needle Crafts have projects in knitting, crochet, embroidery, sewing, quilting, needlepoint, cross stitching and more.



Easy to follow Knitting videos

- [How to Knit: Easy for beginners](#)
- [How to Knit: Part 2 – Easy Purl Knitting](#)
- [How to Knit a Scarf for Beginners Step-by-Step](#)
- [How to Knit a Hat for Complete Beginners](#)

Easy to follow Crocheting videos

- [How to Crochet for Absolutely Beginners](#)
- [How to Crochet a Fast and Easy Blanket](#)
- [How to Crochet the Easiest Hat Ever](#)
- [Crochet X-Twist Headband](#)



Have you ever thought to donate what you knit or crochet? It could be mitts, blankets and warm socks for primary schools or nursing homes. What a good way to give back to the community.

Origami



If you're looking for a fun, challenging and relaxing activity, look no further! Origami is the ancient Japanese art of paper folding. With it, you can create all kinds of objects, animals, shapes, and forms.

Origami can be enjoyed by everyone - young and old, from beginners to experts. It can be done anywhere as long as you have a piece of paper and a set of instructions to follow. It's not only relaxing activity, but can help improve focus, fine motor skills,

and hand-eye coordination. Let's get started!

Materials

- Origami paper (not needed, but can make it easier)
- Instructions of your chosen design

Origami Websites

- [Origami](#) many categories of origami creations.
- [Spruce Crafts Origami](#) many projects with video.



More Origami Videos

We suggest watching videos through once and then watching them again using the pause function at each step. This will help you stay at your own speed without feeling overwhelmed or missing a step.

- [Cat](#)
- [Horse Bookmark](#)
- [Penguin](#)
- [Jumping Frog](#)
- [Fly & Bee](#)
- [Puffy Heart](#)

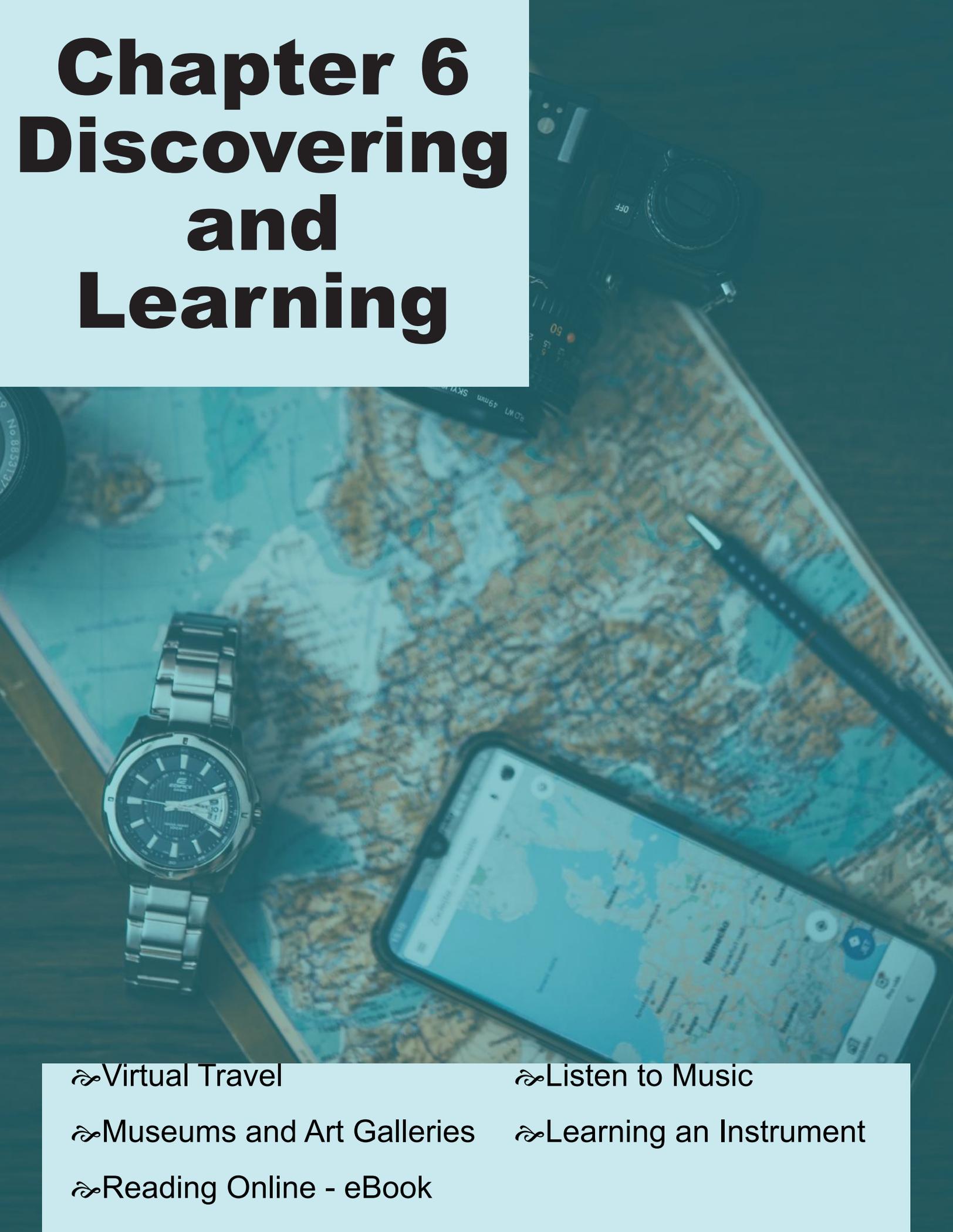
 . Once while we were waiting at a hospital, a volunteer came by and did some origami right in front of us. Once the nice bird was completed, the lady gave it to our child. Although being in the hospital is not pleasant, she gave us moments of joy. The only thanks she wanted were more origami papers, to continue what she was doing.

Chapter 6

Discovering

and

Learning



🌀 Virtual Travel

🌀 Listen to Music

🌀 Museums and Art Galleries

🌀 Learning an Instrument

🌀 Reading Online - eBook

Let's Learn Something New!

Travel broadens the mind, keeps us curious, and there is always more to learn. However, it is not always easy or possible to actually go everywhere you might like to visit.

The good news is that you can visit some museums, cultural monuments, and art galleries virtually! This includes some of the best known places anywhere. We will also give you some links to help visit parks - including national parks - and local places.



Virtual Travel



Have you always dreamed of visiting a particular city or country? Do you have an interest in learning about different cultures and important historical events? Is there a spark of adventure in you waiting to be ignited?

With a digital device (such as an iPad, tablet, computer, or smartphone) and internet access you can visit wherever you want. You can enjoy the tours right from the comfort of your own home. And you can also skip the long airport lines and expense.

Some of the benefits of travel are social - because sharing experiences builds friendships. Bring your friends with you by picking a time to travel virtually at the same time and while talking to or messaging each other.

✿ We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. She speaks French too.



Virtual travelling tours are now being offered by various organizations and agencies. These tours can be experienced both live (with a tour guide) or any other time that is convenient for you.

Virtual Travel Tips

Get yourself comfortable before starting the tour. If you are participating in a live tour, ask your tour guide questions. They are the experts and can help you get something more out the experience.

Some people use objects or props to make your room resemble the travel destination a little more closely. Others make some classic recipes from the place you are visiting.

- [Free virtual tours of different locations](#)
- [Canada from Home: Explore National Parks for Free Online](#)
- [Live Virtual Travel](#)
- [U.S. National Parks](#)

Museums and Art Galleries



The benefits of visiting museums, galleries, and cultural monuments can be considerable. There are benefits both from getting a break from your everyday routines and from learning new things. And you aren't restricted to museums, art galleries, and cultural monuments.

You can visit other places such as planetariums and virtual galaxies! You can even visit zoos, and aquariums. See chapter 3 for

bird and butterfly watching venues.

So go on and check out some of the cool places you can visit right from your home.

Virtual Museums

- [Google Arts and Culture](#)

This website and app give you access to a large list of renown museums and art galleries. It even has fun interactive art games (such as taking selfies that put your face in famous paintings). Links next page

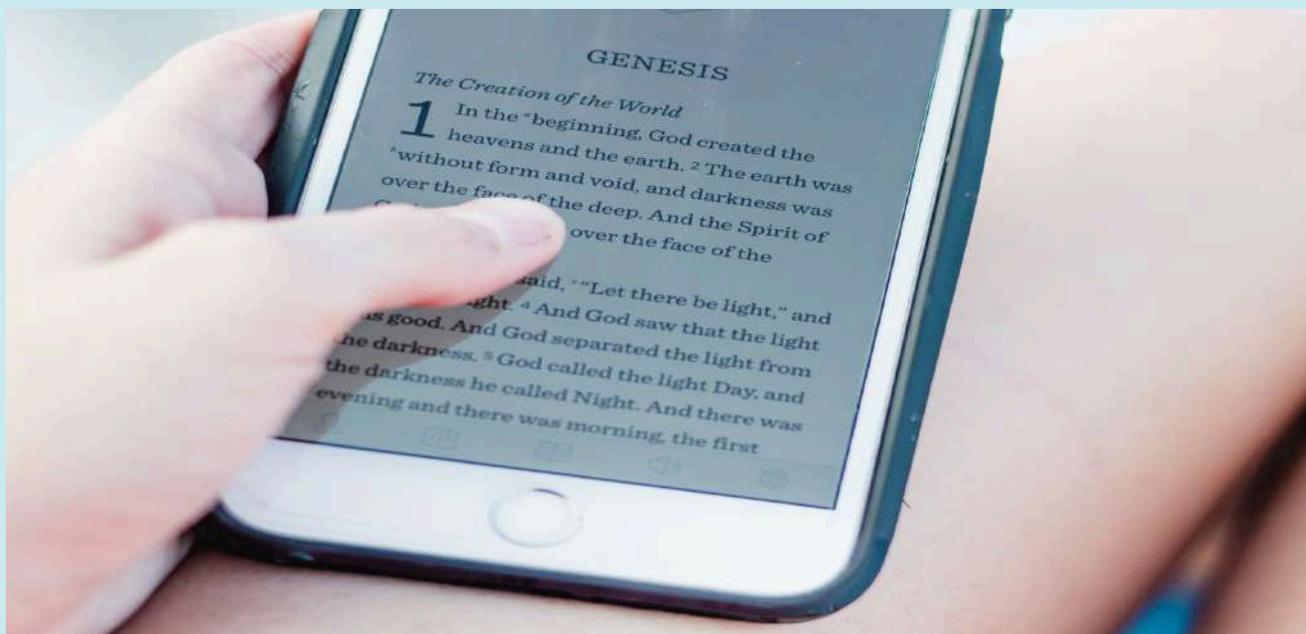


- [The Louvre, Paris](#)
- [The British Museum](#)
- [National Women's History Museum](#) Various online exhibits.
- [Royal Ontario Museum Online](#)
- [Bata Shoe Museum](#)
- [Pacific Museum of Earth](#)
- [Vatican Museum](#)
- [Nasa Museum](#)
- [Hermitage](#)
- [Egyptian Museum](#)
- [Rijks Museum](#)
- [Musée d'Orsay](#)
- [Natural History Museum](#)
- [J Paul Getty Museum](#)

Virtual Art Galleries

- [National Gallery of Art](#) Virtual tours of some of their exhibitions
- [The Dali Museum](#) Artwork of the renowned Salvador Dali
- [Google Sky](#) Explore the universe virtually and learn more about different celestial objects.
- [Vancouver Art Gallery](#)
- [Uffizi Gallery](#)
- [Prado Museum](#)
- [MoMa](#)
- [Guggenheim](#)

Reading Online - eBook



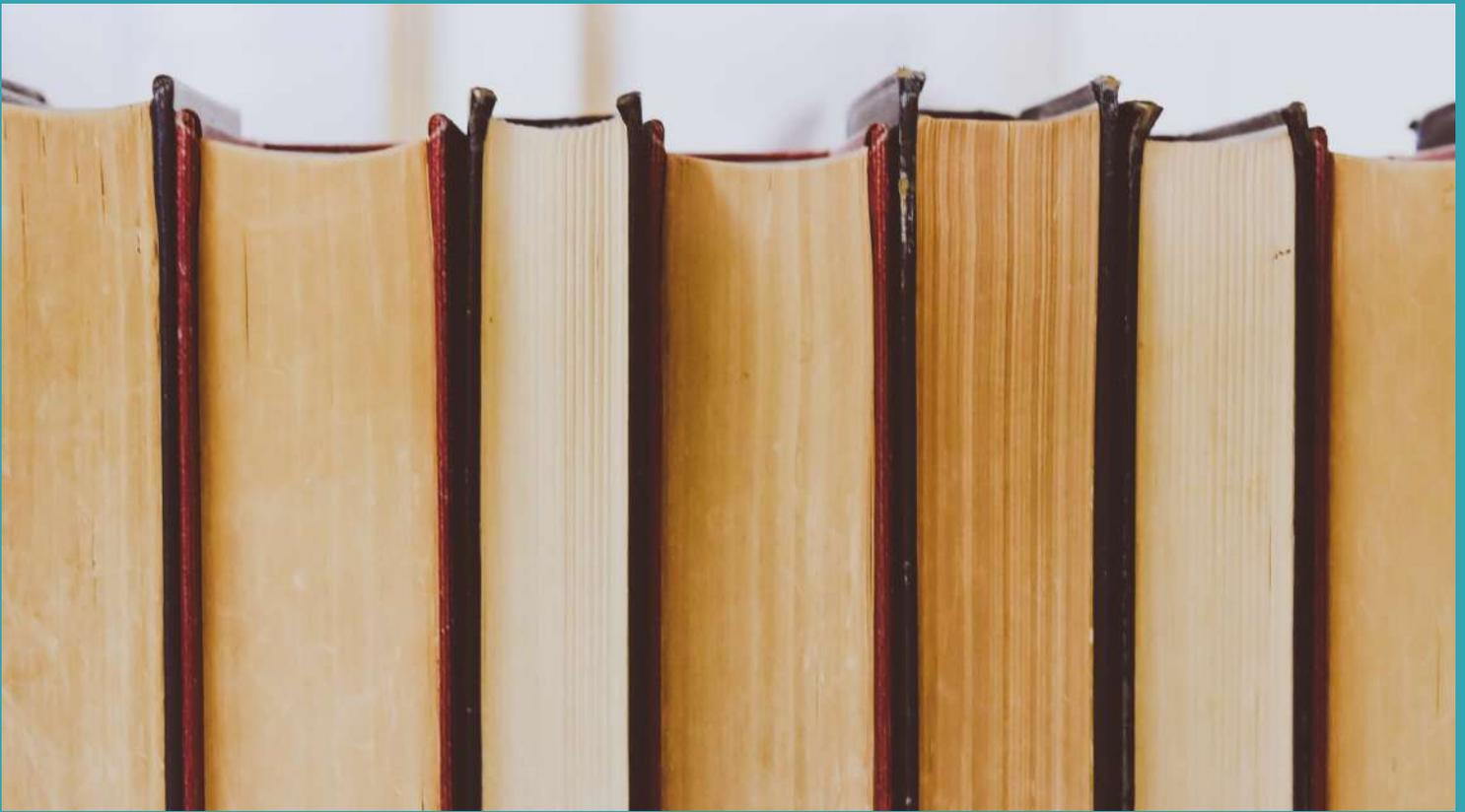
In times of limited social gatherings, where local libraries are closed, and book club meetings are not allowed, reading online might be the safest way to take a trip. No need to find a way to the library or brave storms outside. There are books at the tips of your finger.

Reading is a good way to work out the brain. Whether it's magazines, books, or even the local newspaper reading can provide you with a variety of health benefits. It provides

mental stimulation and get to learn new things. It can reduce stress, help with anxiety and enhance sleep. It may slow memory decline and delay the onset of dementia

Technology can be your friend and help you to stay connected when it comes to reading. For example, book clubs can get together online to share their experiences.

Let's use technology to our advantage!



Reading Online Resources

- [Greater Sudbury Public Library](#)

Most libraries offer access to a variety of digital content such as eBooks, audiobooks, digital magazines, and videos.

From your home, you can search through the books; the only thing required is a library card as you need to sign in and provide the card number.

Visit the link provided above to see all the content of the local library in Sudbury. If you live somewhere else, please search for your local library website. You will be surprised on what you can find online!

- [Project Gutenberg](#)

This is a large online library of free eBooks. You do not need to create an account.

- If you know the title of the book, type it in the **quick search** toward the top of the screen and click **Go!**

- Otherwise, 1) click on the tab **Search and Browse**, 2) click on one of the four options (**Book search**, **Bookshelves**, **Frequently Downloaded** and **Offline catalogs**).

For instance, in the **Bookshelves** books are organized in categories (main categories and in detailed categories). The latter is found further down.

Listen to Music



Isn't it interesting how hearing a particular song can bring back a special memory? Music can make you feel happy, calm or energized. When was the last time you allowed yourself to relax and listen to your favourite songs? Listening to music has the power to improve our health and well-being. It is a universal language that can communicate your feelings while keep you brain sharp. Let's look at some of its benefits.

Benefits

- Improves mood, improves connections with friends and family members and encourages exercise and memory
- Helps to reduce anxiety, depression, blood pressure and pain
- May help to improve creativity, learning and memory, and sleep quality
- Singing along may help keep you sharp



Where to listen Music

Not sure where to find the songs you like? Don't worry, music has never been more affordable and easier to access. YouTube is a website that offer a wide variety of music free of charge.

Playlists

- [Hits from the 40s](#)
- [Hits from the 50s](#)
- [Hits from the 60s](#)
- [Garden Playlist](#)
- [Top 100 Jazz Classics Playlist](#)

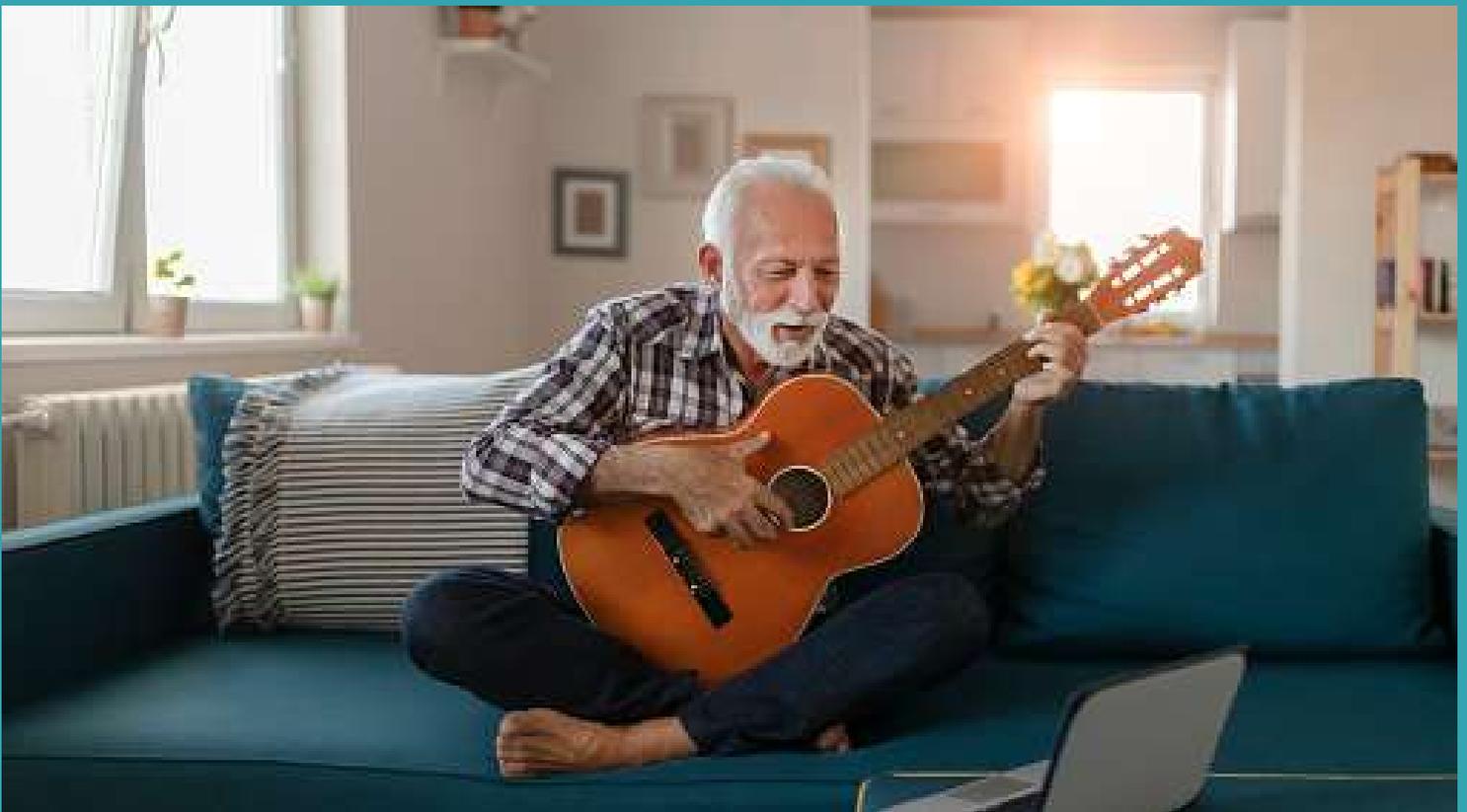
Concerts Online

- [Songs for Seniors](#)
- [Victoria Symphony](#)
- [The Royal Conservatory](#)
- [Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra](#)
- [Opera Everywhere COC](#)
- [Classic FM](#)
- [London's National Theatre: Life in Stages](#)

Music Streaming Apps

Here are some apps that you can download and enjoy the songs you like wherever you go:

- Spotify
- Deezer
- SoundCloud



If you are looking for more concerts or music, a lot more is available on YouTube.

Online Radio Stations

Tune in to radio stations of your choice and liking by going to the websites and apps below.

- [AccuRadio](#) *Genre:* All different kinds of channels (900+), including some that play music from the 50s, 60s, and 70s;
- [Radio.Net](#) *Genre:* 30 000+ radio stations, including ones with 50s and 60s hits; also has podcasts
- [iHeart Radio](#) *Genre:* All different kinds; also has podcasts; *Cost:* Free to use, but does have the option of in-app purchases
- [Radio.com](#) *Genre:* All different kinds
- [TuneIn Radio](#) *Genre:* All different kinds, 100 000+ stations

Learning an Instrument



It's never too late to learn something new! Learning a musical instrument is a great way to pass the time. Not only is it a great skill, but it provides you with a talent to showcase to your friends and family! There are many ways to start. While in-person classes allow you to work with an instructor to practice your technique, you can also learn from the comfort of your own home. Zoom, online classes, and apps are all an amazing way for you to self-teach.

Benefits

Here are some benefits of learning an instrument. This list is from: [16 Benefits of playing an instrument](#)

- Increases personal discipline, time-management skills, patience and perseverance
- Uses almost every part of the brain, reduces stress, decreases age-related hearing loss, Speeds up reaction time, develops music appreciation



Instruments for beginners

While there are many instruments out there, some of the best ones to learn as a beginner include the piano, the harmonica, the acoustic guitar, and the ukulele.

The piano provides a great outlet for all types of music; most people will want some lessons although there are apps that can help. While real pianos are quite large and typically very expensive, another cheaper alternative is the electric keyboard, which has all of the same functions as

a traditional piano at a fraction of the cost. They can be rented.

Our second option, the harmonica, may better fit people who like blues or country music. There are many different types of harmonicas out there, all ranging in price. We suggest going to a music store to get advice.

Our third option, the acoustic guitar, is another amazing option to learn all types of music!

And finally, we suggest the ukulele. The ukulele is very similar in appearance to the guitar, but on a

much smaller scale, making it easier to hold. Not only that, but they are also one of the least expensive musical instruments.

It is never too late to learn something new. Don't let shyness keep you back.

Learning an Instrument Online

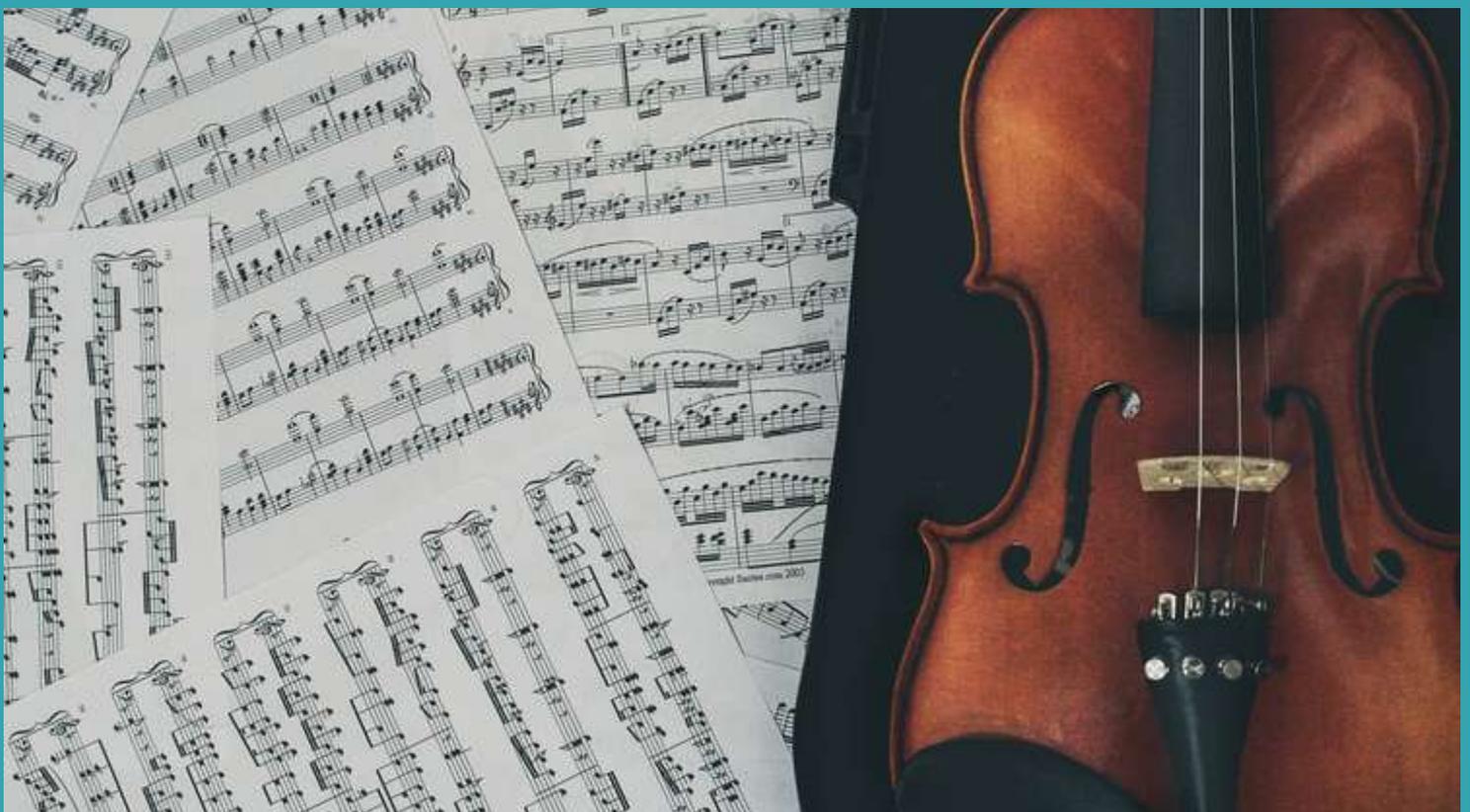
- Flowkey- Piano App
- Yousician- Guitar/ukulele App
- Inconclusive- Harmonica App
- [Website offering online classes](#)

You can also consider taking private or group lessons using

videoconferencing (e.g. Zoom, Facetime).



. Someone we know went back to playing the cello at age 60. She had learn some fundamentals as a teenager, but was a bit out of practice. With private lessons she got better and better until her teacher invited her to play in a symphonic orchestra. At one point she was playing in 3!
Who says we cannot learn new things at a certain age?



Chapter 7 Wellness and Writing



- ∞ Self-compassion
- ∞ Meditation

- ∞ Gratitude
- ∞ Journaling
- ∞ Writing

Let's Take Care of Ourselves!

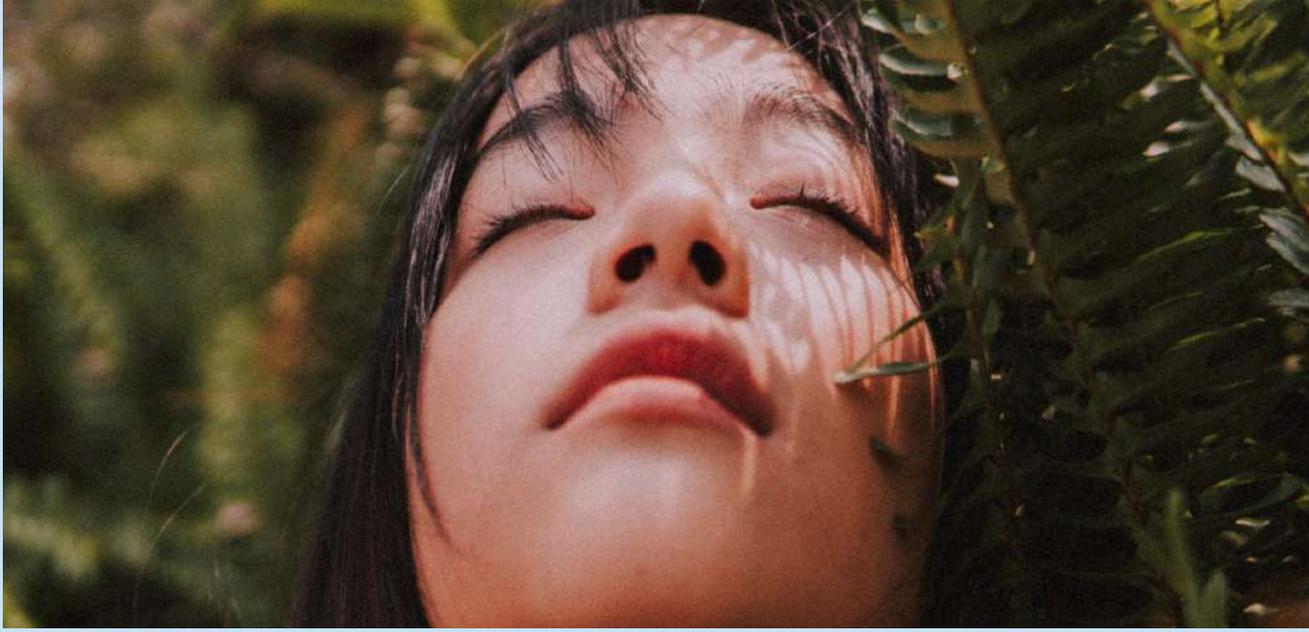
We worry about our physical health, but our mental health also needs attention.

By meditating, exercising our gratitude, and even writing down our emotions are tools that we can use to lift our spirits and release the stress of our routines.

Take a look at our tips of how to take care of your inner self.



Self-Compassion



“Self-compassion is a powerful way to cope with the curveballs life throws – like the COVID-19 pandemic” - Walters et al., 2021.

Self-compassion means showing yourself the same grace and compassion that one would expect of a friend.

Research has shown that practicing self-compassion and cultivating this attitude can improve your wellbeing in addition to reducing feelings of anxiety and depression. Ready to give it a try?

- [Self-Compassion Guided Meditations and Exercises](#)

Dr. Kristin Neff offers 8 exercises on this website. They have been shown to improve self-compassion in people who committ to doing them. You can also listen to different kinds of meditations. It is an occasion to take care of your inner self, be kind with yourself.



Laughter



There are many reasons why we say laughter is the best medicine.

Laughter lowers stress hormones, relaxes the whole body, decreases pain and is a great way to boost immune system.

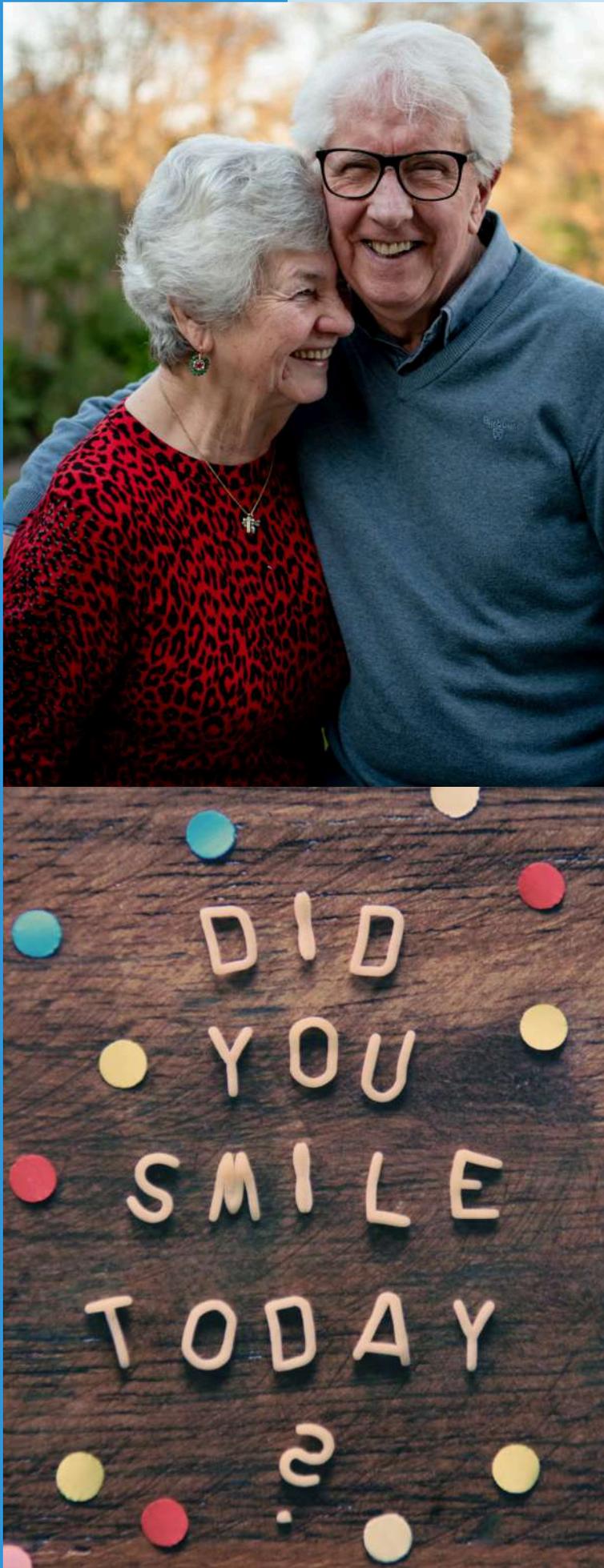
Laughter adds joy and puts everyone in a good mood. It's one of the easiest and most convenient mood-boosters out there. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins - the happy chemicals in your brains. It is a

good way to stay mentally healthy. Laughter shifts perspective lighten distressing emotions: anger, conflict, etc.

Laughter with others is a great way to bond. Sharing a joke with a grandchild can help build a closer connection.

People who laugh more, on average, live longer! A positive mindset is key to longevity.

In other words, there are many physical and mental health benefits to including more humour in your life.



Ways to bring more laughter in your life

- Start by smiling more. Look at people and smile at them. The others will react positively to your smile.
- Stay positive. Someone upset is certainly less likely to laugh.
- Try to see the humour and positives in everyday situations. Practice and you will get better at it.
- Put things around you that will remind you to take life on the funny side (posters, pictures of people having fun, fun objects).
- You can add more laughter by actively seeking out humour-filled activities or material. Search for jokes to learn. Watch funny movies. Read fun stuff.
- If you use Facebook, search for facebook pages of good jokes. You will then start receiving jokes on a regular basis. Notice what's fun around you and write it down.
- Become friends with positive and funny people. If you hear laugh, get closer to it.
- Bring humour into conversations by asking others to talk about funny things. "What is the funniest things that happen to you lately?"



More examples

- Watch stand-up comics online. There are many available stand-up routines you can watch on streaming services such as Netflix, CBC Gem, HBO, or, for free, at YouTube.
- Find movies and TV series that are funny: Charlie Chaplin, Pink Panther with Steve Martin, Home Alone, Grace and Frankie. You could get inspired by the list of [100 movies](#) on the previous link.
- The comic strip section of your local newspaper has some good

laughs in there!. Save your favourites and mail them to friends so they can share the laugh!

- Many online or satellite radio stations (such as Sirius XM) have plenty of funny podcasts. A few channels you may want to check out if you have Sirius XM include: Comedy Central Radio (channel 95) and Comedy Greats (channel 94).

“Being funny wasn’t a career choice growing up, it was my way out of situations; a way to survive another day.” —Tracy Morgan

Meditation



Meditation is one of the easier ways to work on mental health. In simple terms, meditation is a way to calm the mind and body. It is associated with many psychological and physical benefits.

The best part of meditation is that it is available anywhere! It does not require specialized equipment or space, so you can practice at home, in nature—anywhere you feel comfortable.

Meditation can be performed alone or with a group. Taking meditation classes is a good choice if you are just starting. These classes provide a supportive community.

If you want to start meditating you can use the tips provided in this guide as a starting point. If you explore the links we provide you will notice that there are different types of meditation. Find one that suits you.



Benefits

- Promote better focus, concentration and improve cognitive function (including creativity)
- Reduces stress, help reduce depression and help controls anxiety
- Boost emotional wellbeing
- Improves sleep, helps control pain
- May decrease blood pressure and offset the age-related cognitive decline and delay onset of dementia

Are you still skeptical? Please check out this webpage: [141](#)

[Benefits of Meditation](#)

Meditation Tips

Meditation brings positivity to your day, so take advantage of the morning quiet by starting your day with a meditation session.

Set your alarm earlier than usual, and use that extra time for your meditation practice.

Meditation is about cultivating presence, awareness and non-judgment feelings. When you are mindful of your actions, you pay more attention to what you are doing.



Guided meditation

Meditation classes or guided meditations are widely available. Here you can find some webpages to start your journey in the meditation world. Let's give it a try!

- [Free Guided Meditations](#) This website provides recorded meditations as well as an app.
- [Mindful Meditation for Seniors: Techniques](#)

Here you will find free meditation videos.

- [Mindfulness: How to do it](#)
- [Free Mindfulness Apps Worthy of your Attention.](#)
- [Meditation for older adults](#)
- [Meditation Videos](#)



For many people, the practice of meditation daily does calm them, help them get a new perspective on things and improve their well-being.

Gratitude



Gratitude is an attitude of acknowledging and expressing appreciation for the good in our lives. Recognize good experiences and respond with appreciation to the kindnesses others have done for us.

Having this positive attitude lead to numerous benefits. It helps you feel satisfied and happy with what you have. It helps you find meaning in your life and increases empathy. It helps you deal with challenges, reduces stress and depressive

feelings. It also leads to experiencing other positive emotions and improves your relationships with others.

Ways to develop gratitude

- **Gratitude letters**

Write a gratitude letter to someone whom you want to express appreciation to. The letter can be to someone close to you or to people who have been kind to you - from healthcare professionals to clerks or neighbours.



- **Gratitude Diary**

Many people find that writing a diary, however brief, is helpful. We recommend focussing on the positive. If nothing else comes to mind, start by writing down 5 things you are grateful for each day. These can be quite simple.

Examples: “I am grateful for the fact that I have food on the table” or “I am grateful for the invention of the telephone; it allows me to communicate with others during these difficult times” or “I am grateful for that nice weather today.”

- **Count your blessings**

Think about or share with other people the things you are grateful for. Think about the good you have in your life. For example: “I am grateful for the fact that I am healthy now.”

- **Prayer**

For individuals who are religious or spiritual, prayer provides a good opportunity to express and experience gratitude. Express appreciation toward a higher being about the events in your life that are going well for you. For example: “God, I am grateful that my grandchildren called me today.”

Journaling



Did you ever have a diary as a child or a planner you always used? If so, journaling may be just the activity for you. A journal is like a diary, but can be more versatile. People choose what to put in. Some write down thoughts, events, or plans, while others even add artwork and crafts.

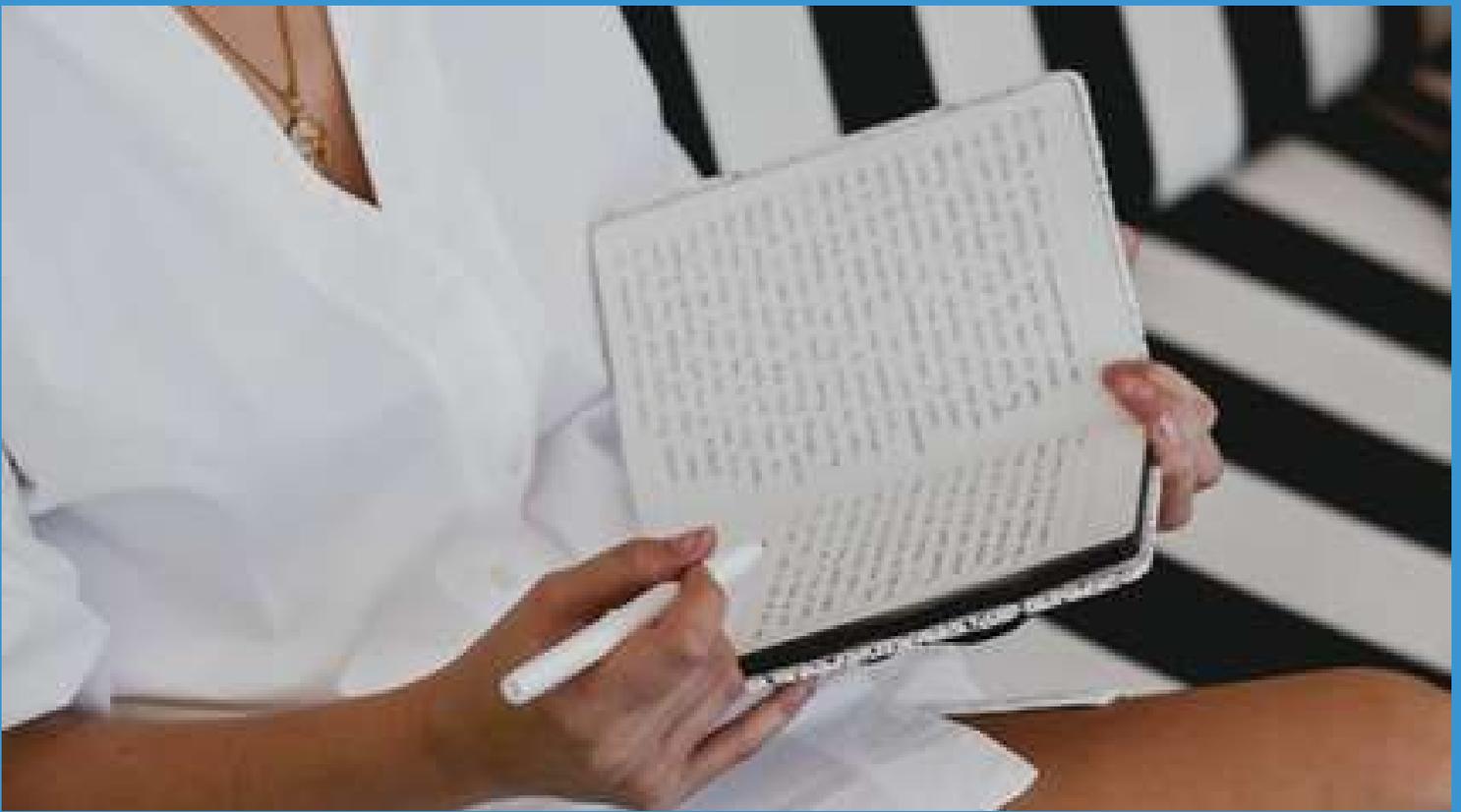
In times where we are unable to socialize with family and friends, it is important that we connect with our mental health.

Keeping a journal is a great way to do so!

The best part about this activity is you can do it anywhere at any time! Typically, you want to journal when you have a free moment in your day.

Benefits

- Reduces stress,
- Boosts your mood and can enhance your sense of well-being
- Calms and clears your mind; improves your working memory and keeps you creative.



- Helps to develop coping strategies
- Helps to identify negative thoughts and behaviours to track day-to-day changes so you can recognize triggers that change your behaviours
- Helps to guide your decisions, to prioritize problems, fears and concerns.



We would love to receive your feedback, your suggestions.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. She speaks French too.

Journaling Types and Apps

There are different types of journals with different purposes. The journals described in this guide can be found in any craft store.

For those with regular access to tablets or computers, we suggest some popular apps on the next page. With one of these apps you will have everything you need at hand to journal where and when you wish.



- **Journal with blank pages**

These types of journals are great for artwork, as they provide a blank canvas for creativity.

App: Autodesk Sketchbook

- **Planner Journal**

These types of journals are great because they come premade with sections for you to plan events that will be happening during the month. They typically act as reminders for events or places you have to go. You can have an electronic version of it by downloading the following application.

App: ClickUp



- **Journal with Bullets**

This type of journal has pages that are covered in a light grid of dots. Using these dots, you can create your own planner. It combines all three types of journals and allows for the most creativity to plan how you wish.

Apps:

- Journey

Journaling Tips

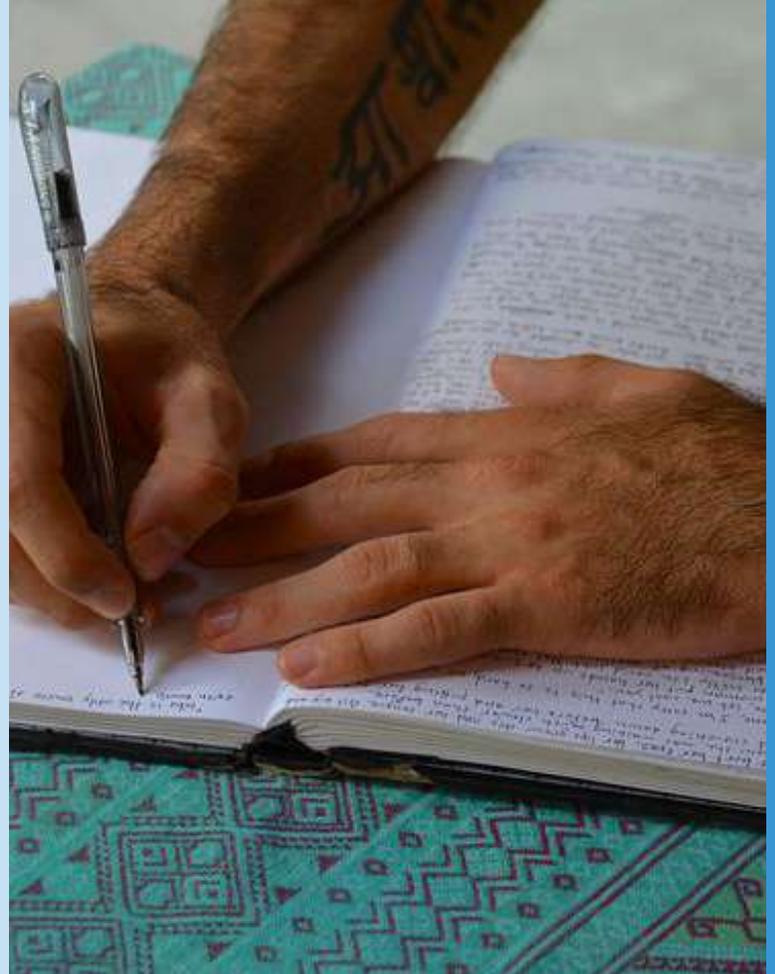
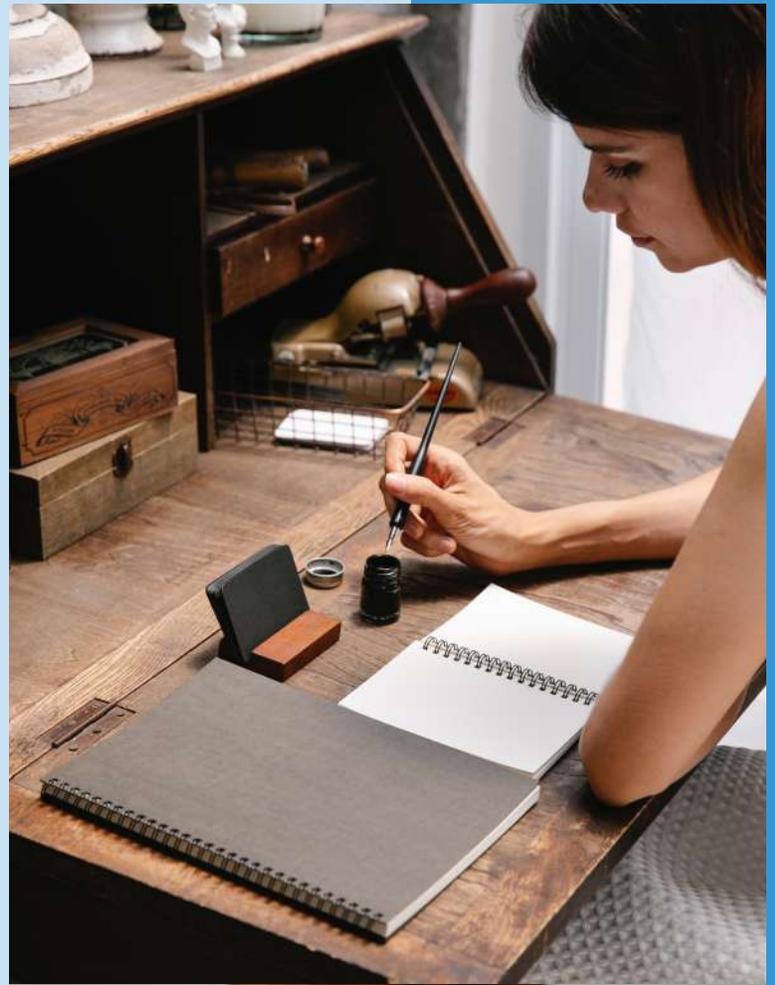
To help you write regularly in your journal, try to set aside a few minutes every day to write.

Make it easy. Keep a pen and paper handy at all times. Then when you want to write down your thoughts, you can. You can also keep a journal in a computer file.

Your journal doesn't need to follow any structure. It's your own private place to discuss whatever you want.

Let the words flow freely. Don't worry about spelling mistakes or what other people might think.

Use your journal as you see fit. You don't have to share your journal with anyone. If you do want to share some of your thoughts with trusted friends and loved ones, you could show them parts of your journal.



Writing



If you can write then you can write a book. There is nothing really stopping you.

Some people jump into writing their favourite sorts of books:

- Fiction, novel, comic
- Art, science, history

However, many seniors have discovered that stories from their lives are treasured by friends and family. Write about :

- your biography, your memoir
- jobs you have done

- things you were or are good at
- your genealogy tree
- knowledge you have
- funny things that happened to you or to people you know
- things that you had to do
- things that existed before (for instance the first laundry machines)
- songs that you know

Most people don't feel very special, but once they find that parts of their life make for an interesting story.



Some resources

- [What You Need to Write Your First Book After Age 50](#)
- [How to write your autobiography: a guide for seniors](#)
- [Four tips to help you start writing you memoirs today](#)

 Some people write short books about themselves to share memories with family and friends. It is good to share and they are wonderful to read.

- [Recording life stories: 5 ways to help seniors share special memories](#)

This last link is meant for someone that would like to help you share your memories. This person could record what you are saying about your life. On this website, they suggest several ways to help you share your memories.

N.B. This information was shared by Vita Life Story on an award winner Best Caregiver Website in 2020.

<https://dailycaring.com/>

It is worth looking at.



 Josée's grand-father, Jean-Paul, was excellent at making home made wines: with sour cherries, with clover or with dandelion. They were delicious! Unfortunately he didn't write down the instructions for us.

 Bruce's father wrote a book on his family history. It included places where he lived, signatures of ancestors, pictures and anecdotes from his life and that of his parents. It allowed his own children and grand-children to know him better. Now that he has passed, it is a treasure for his children and grand-children.

Conclusion



The reader may have noticed a theme throughout this guide. The activities being recommended were all selected because they are good for you. Sometimes we all get bored and, loneliness can make this worse. It is as much of a health risk as smoking or abusing alcohol.

The authors were asked to read the scientific literature to find some activities that have been proven to help keep people active and engaged. There are many more that could have been included in this guide.



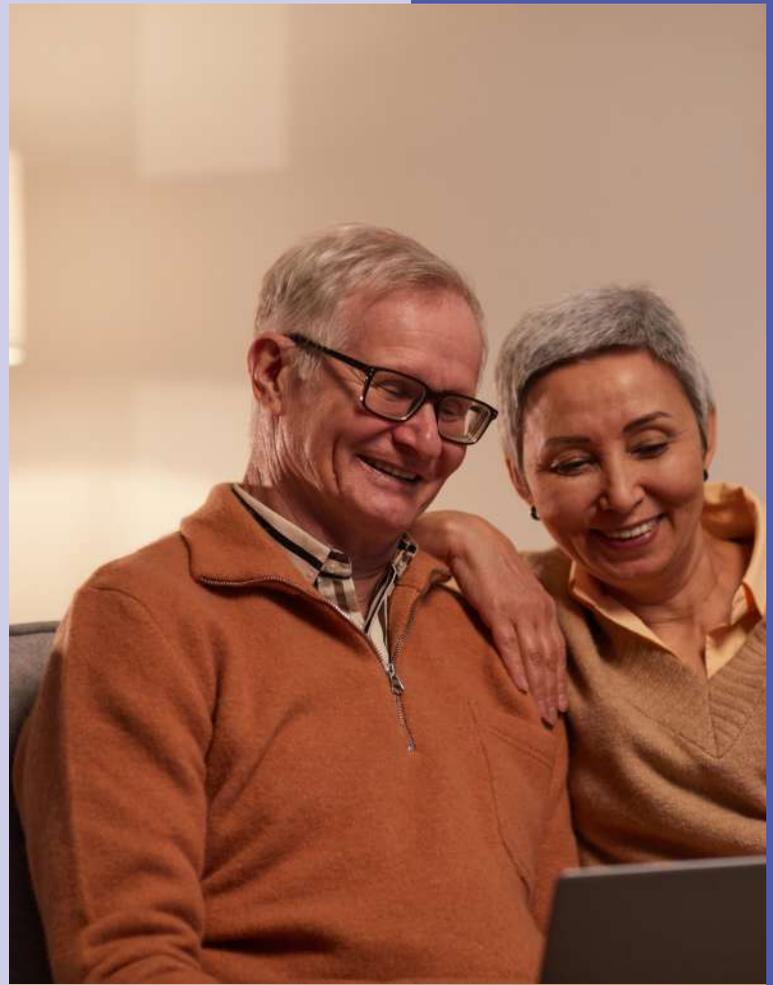
Our team's original goal was to suggest a few select activities to seniors feeling isolated because of COVID-19. We would offer access to tablets, try to support them getting used to the online world, and see if we learn how to make it easier for everyone else.

As it happened, we did not have the right to walk into senior homes and teach them. This brought us to decided to make this guide available to everyone. We do hope, however, that if you try some of the activities, or go to particular links, that you consider writing us to let us know whether it was a good suggestion. We can also add activities and websites that deserve to be shared.

With feedback we could make a guide that is more useful, more interesting, and more fun.

Bruce and Josée

lira_well_being@laurentian.ca



Research

Laurentian Research Institute for Aging does have ongoing research. A number of our research projects require the participation of seniors. We are always looking for more participants.

If you are wondering if you could participate in our research, please feel free to contact us. It will be a pleasure for us to explain what are the ongoing research is about and what it would involved to participate in one of them.

Please write an email to lira_well_being@laurentian.ca or call Josée Turcotte at 705 675-1151 ext. 4238. You can indicate it is about the ongoing research. The message be in French too. Plusieurs membres de notre équipe sont bilingues, comme Bruce et Josée.



Laurentian Research
Institute for Aging
Institut de Recherche du
Vieillissement de la **Laurentienne**

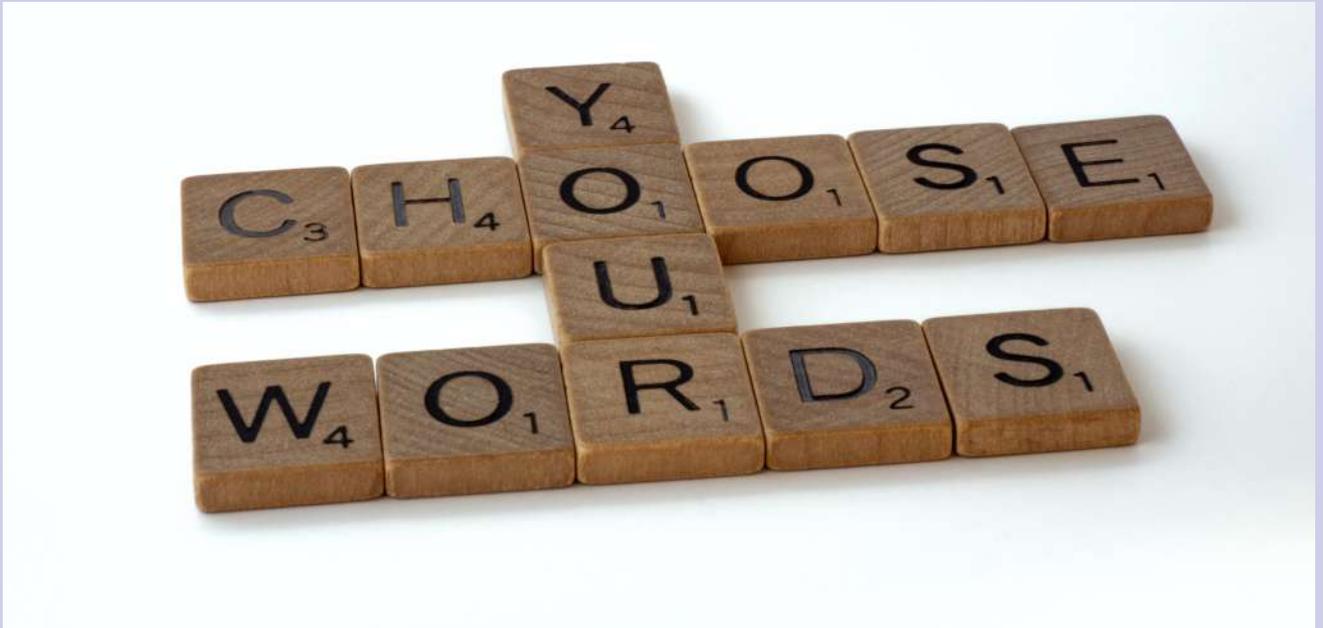
LRIA
IRVL



« We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing. »

George Bernard Shaw

Index



- Art gallery.....61
- Bird watching.....23
- Card games.....4, 16, 33-37
- Clubs..... 4, 62
- Connect.....2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 62, 64, 73, 81
- Crafting.....24, 43, 48-52, 54
- Crocheting.....51-53
- Dancing..... 9-13
- Drawing..... 43, 46-47
- Fitness.....3, 13
- Gardening.....18-20, 27

Activity Subtitle

- Journalling..... 81-84
- Knitting..... 4, 43, 51-53
- Museums.....27, 57, 60-61
- Music..... 9, 11, 12, 48, 64-69
- Origami.....54-55
- Outdoors.....3, 16, 18-20, 26
- Pets..... 22, 24, 28-31
- Puzzles.....38-41
- Reading..... 4, 18, 62-63
- Reduce stress.....9, 14, 18, 34, 44, 45, 62, 67, 71,
73, 77, 79, 81
- Social Media.....3, 6
- Virtual Travel.....57-59
- Volunteering..... 5, 6, 30, 55
- Walking.....3, 7, 14, 15, 26, 89
- Writing..... 79, 81, 84-86
- Yoga..... 16-17