

# Healthy uses of music in times of anxiety

It is natural for our minds and bodies to respond to the uncertainty we're faced with at present. Some of us might feel stressed, easily frustrated, or not sleeping so well. Others might fidget, pace or feel anxious. There are many ways to feel less stressed or anxious, sleep better and feel calmer. Using music is one helpful way of achieving this.

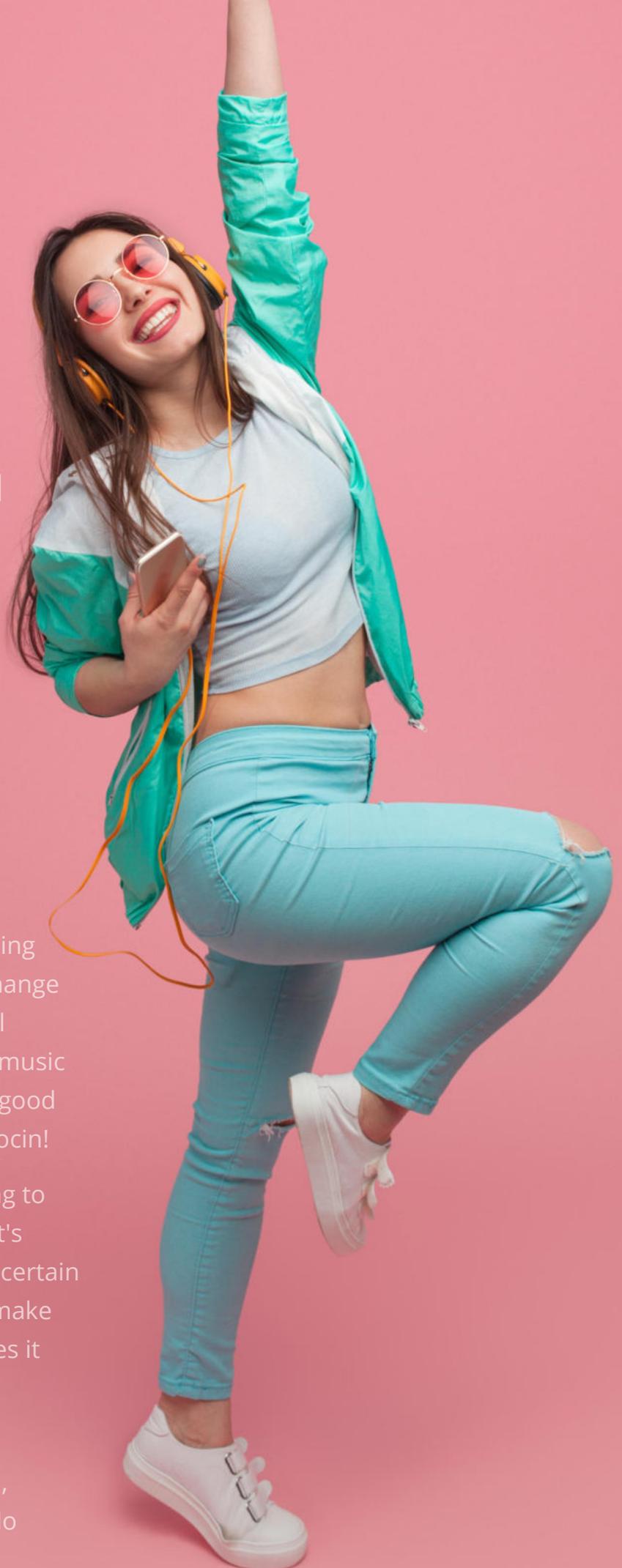
Being aware of the impact of our music choices may help the way we listen to music. Music can help bring our mood to a healthier and more positive space, and allow us to feel more in control of our thoughts and emotions.

## Our mood and music

Many people engage in music listening daily. We might listen to music to change our mood or set a new mood to feel better. In fact research tells us that music can activate our body's natural feel good chemicals like endorphins and oxytocin!

Sometimes it's possible that listening to music may make us feel worse. So it's important to be aware of the effect certain songs have on you. Does the song make you feel better or worse? When does it stop being helpful?

Some people find categorising their music into different playlists helpful, but remember the same song can do different things at different times.





## Learn an instrument

Listening to music is not the only way music can be helpful. You might want to take advantage of the extended time you have at home and learn to play a musical instrument.

The ukulele is great for beginners to master a few chords quickly and easily. There are even ukulele lessons on YouTube!.

## Music and mindfulness

There is a lot of publicity and research on the benefits of mindfulness activities. It is certainly beneficial in times like the present.

You can do a mindful practice with music by choosing a song without words, only instrumental, and preferably a song you haven't heard.

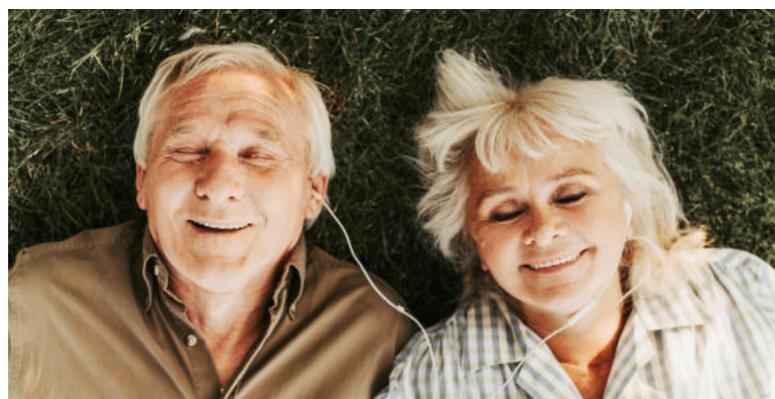
Find a place to sit or stand, press play and observe or bring your attention to the tune, bass line, rhythm or beat, without judgement.

## Music and family time

Making music is a great way to hang out with your family. You might want to sing together or do a home-style karaoke with YouTube or have a jamming session with other family members playing different instruments (you could try making your own!). Don't forget - including some movement with music is a great way to keep the body moving too!

## Music and technology

For those of you who want to make music and enjoy technology, there are apps you can download like Loop, iKaossilator and Drum Pad Machine (DPM).



# When to seek out a music therapist

If you or someone you know, are feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope with our current situation, or have chronic or complex health needs, you may wish to seek the services of a Registered Music Therapist.

Registered Music Therapists are able to deliver individually tailored, evidence-based music therapy in a safe setting. Many are currently working via tele-health, so you can access their service from the safety of your own home. The NDIS also supports the use of music therapy delivered via tele-health.

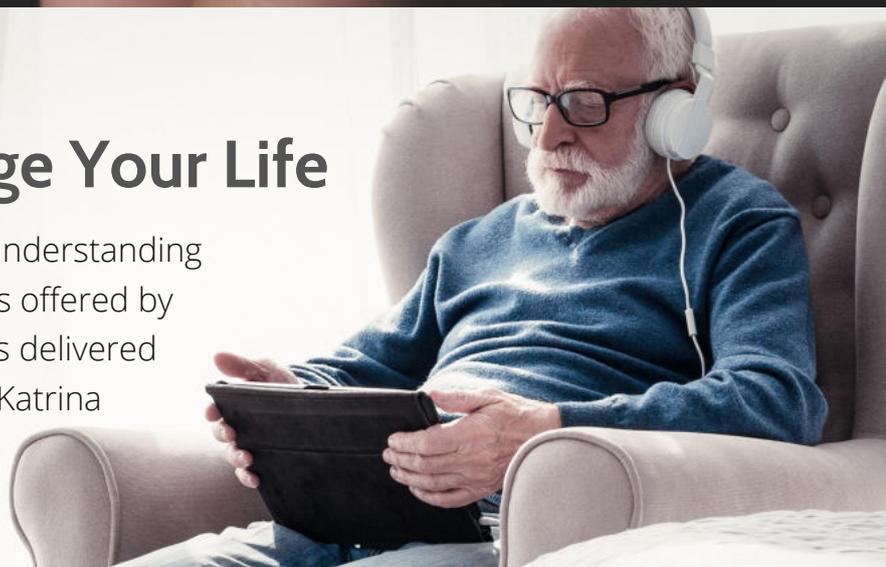
To find a Registered Music Therapist visit our website at [austmta.org.au](http://austmta.org.au).



## Free course: How Music Can Change Your Life

If you are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of music and well-being, this free course is offered by the University of Melbourne. The course is delivered by Registered Music Therapist, Professor Katrina Skewes McFerran. Find out more at:

[www.coursera.org/learn/music-life](http://www.coursera.org/learn/music-life)



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