Good Vibrations

Magazine — Issue 1

Good Vibrations is here with inspiration to keep us busy, ways to look after ourselves and interesting things to do from home. Being away from family and friends is hard, so go out of your way to keep in touch, to stay active and remain curious. This issue is packed with ideas – enjoy!

Linda Robinson,
Chief Executive, Age NI

Olive MacLeod,
Chief Executive, Public Health Agency

Take Notice with Joe Mahon



Famous for his Lesser Spotted Ulster and Ulster Giants series, broadcaster Joe Mahon shares his lockdown distractions.

When it comes to surviving lockdown, I am no paragon of virtue: I eat too much ice-cream and watch too much TV.

I have an addiction to CNN News and "Scandi-Noir" crime dramas. They're usually quite depressing but they demand total concentration because if you take your eyes off the subtitles, you've lost the plot (a bit like watching CNN!).

I soon realised that I needed to get outdoors every day. I'm close to a park with a big hill. It's not for the faint-hearted, but I fancied the challenge. I never thought I'd stick to it, but I now actually look forward to it.

Nature is a wonderful distraction. The garden looks sadly neglected at this time of year and you wonder how anything could survive. But magically, you'll notice tiny fragile-looking snowdrops poking their heads up through the frozen muck. Then daffodils suddenly come from nowhere and the odd tulip. Resilience is all around.

We've always hung bird feeders in the garden – mostly for selfish reasons because they're a great distraction while you're washing the dishes. When I noticed that our robin was valiantly trying and failing to cling on to the suet ball feeder, I happed myself up and re-hung it so he could reach it. Was he grateful? It doesn't matter, because I was. Feeling useful is good.

Read more from Joe, including how he's transformed all his furniture with a passion for painting, at **www.ageni.org/JoeMahonslockdown**

Photo Credit: Stephen Hamilton

Take5 steps to wellbeing

There are five simple steps to help keep well. Build these into daily life. Think of them as your 'five a day' for feeling good.

Connect

Stay in touch with friends, family and neighbours by phone or video calls.

Be Active

Exercise makes us feel good mentally and physically, keeps bones and muscles strong.

Take Notice

Take a moment to be still and look around you. Focus on things that bring you joy.

Keep Learning

Set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a new hobby.

Give

Do something nice for someone, volunteer to become a phone befriender – feelgood is real!

Age NI registered charity number NIC104640

Keep Learning

You're never too old to learn something new!



We asked Age NI's Consultative Forum to share some of the activities and distractions they have discovered online. Anne Murray from Belfast has shared her top finds:

Time To Develop A New Skill

Queens University has a series of open learning classes, where you can learn creative writing, delve into history or study photography.
www.qub.ac.uk/sites/open-learning/Courses

Try a free language course: **www.duolingo.com**

Enjoy Virtual Arts

Check out the free opportunities offered by the Nerve Centre, including live music performances, local art and culture and creative projects:
www.nervecentre.org/content/programmes

Local History & Heritage

If you're a fan of our cover star, Joe Mahon, the NI Screen hub is chock full of archive programmes, including Lesser Spotted Ulster and McGilloway's Way. Just type the name into the archive search and they're all there:
www.digitalfilmarchive.net/index

A Window on the World

Watch the animals at Dublin Zoo - Webcams allow you to watch some of the zoo's most popular animals live: **www.dublinzoo.ie**

Explore New York's The Metropolitan Museum of Art:
www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/met-360-project

Mind your Anxiety

When there's so much going on around you that you can't control, you can really improve your physical and mental wellbeing by focusing on what you can. I've found Padraig O'Morain's teachings on mindfulness helpful.

The inspirational Padraig is in his 80's and he has online workshops, a good website and sends out a 'daily bell' email: **www.padraigomorain.com**

You might find the simple advice in this BBC article (Five Ways to Stay Positive Through Lockdown) useful too:
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55264224

If we can do it, so can *YOU!*

"Getting online has been a life-saver for me since the pandemic - seeing friends and family and being able to attend church online has kept me sane. I was totally averse to it before, but now I can't imagine life without the internet."
Harry, 83, Enniskillen

"We would never have shopped online before but needs must, and once we got to grips with it, it has been a lifeline to get our weekly groceries home delivered."
Sandra, 73, Cookstown

"My daughter suggested doing a weekly zoom quiz for the grandkids – it's been fun to see them on screen when we can't see them face to face and a great idea to bring us all together."
David, 79, Ballyclare

Get Online

Getting online can open up a whole world of communication, connection and information. But if you're not familiar with technology, it's really daunting, right? You're not alone. If you have a smart phone, a tablet, or any kind of computer, check out some of these brilliant websites which will give you the skills and confidence to get more out of the internet – safely – and designed to support people just like you. Alternatively, ask friends or family for help to get you started.



Libraries NI: www.librariesni.org.uk/resources/digital-support
Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet
NI Direct: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/training-and-resources

Be Active



"I have been doing my Move with Mary exercises a couple of times a day, when I get up and a bit more at lunch and teatime. I try to get a walk every day if it's dry. Because I can't visit my friends at the moment, staying active and keeping in touch with them and family is what keeps me going."
Patsy, 78, Newtownabbey

Move With Mary



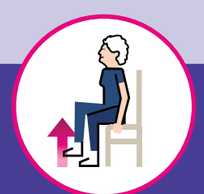
Being active is proven to give you a boost. You don't need to be a "gym bunny" to feel the mental and physical benefits of movement. Gardening and housework count as exercise and going for a daily walk is a great way to enjoy the outdoors.

Regular activity keeps bones and muscles strong and helps with balance. Try not to sit still for more than an hour at a time and aim for at least 30 minutes of active movement each day.

There are lots of fun videos available on YouTube. Try Age NI's free series of Move with Mary exercises led by Lady Mary Peters, aimed at keeping older people moving while staying at home.

Lady Mary said, "Movement is life. These exercises are nice and gentle: there are stretches you can do whilst sitting and moves you can practice while waiting for the kettle to boil. It all adds up to help you feel good." You'll find the videos at
www.ageni.org/movewithmary





The 'Seated March'



Arm Swing



Ankle Loosener



Spine Twists

Connect & Give

We're a resilient lot in Northern Ireland. Friendship and community matter to us. More than ever, it's important to stay connected and remember that others are likely to be feeling the same. The benefits of community are still there while we're apart.

Make an effort to lift the phone and say hello to keep in touch with friends, family and neighbours. Remind them to do the same for others and create a wave of connection every time you get in touch.

You can also connect to the world outside your window by just taking a moment to observe what's happening in nature. Nothing will stop the arrival of Spring.

Find joy in the everyday: the ritual of making a really good cup of tea or getting a question right on The Chase!

This time will pass. There are helplines and local organisations who are here to listen and support. Look after yourself and look after each other.

Be a good neighbour

If you know of an older person or a neighbour on their own, or caring for someone else, check in with them by phone, drop a note through their door and give them your number, or even pass on this leaflet! A helping hand with groceries or a pharmacy collection could mean the world to them.

Age NI – Advice Line

Age NI's website: **www.ageni.org** is packed with ideas, tips and guidance.

Age NI's free, independent confidential advice line helps thousands of people every year.

If you are concerned about yourself, a family member or friend, do not hesitate to contact Age NI – we are here to help!

Get in touch via freephone **0808 808 7575** or email **advice@ageni.org**

Age Sector Networks

There are groups in every part of Northern Ireland ready to help through the Age Sector Network. Get in touch with your local group

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon: ABC Seniors Network
Tel: 07734 806763

Ards & North Down: AGENDA - Age North Down & Ards
Tel: 028 9127 1968

Belfast: G6 / Engage With Age
Tel: 028 9073 5696

Causeway Coast & Glens: COAST - Causeway Older Active Strategic Team
Tel: 028 7776 7860

Lisburn & Castlereagh: Lisburn & Castlereagh Age Friendly
Tel: 028 9244 7327

Mid & East Antrim
Tel: 028 2565 8604

Mid Ulster: MUSN Mid Ulster Seniors Network
Tel: 07814 196935

Southern Age Well Network
Tel: 028 3026 6024

Down Seniors Forum: County Down Rural Community Network
Tel: 028 4461 2311

Derry City & Strabane
Tel: 028 7186 0123

Antrim and Newtownabbey: Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum
Tel: 07594 378635

Fermanagh & Omagh: South West Age Partnership
Tel: 028 8225 1824

"The help we received from the Advice Line will benefit myself and my wife greatly. The adviser listened, cared and understood my situation."

"My contact with the Advice Line was a very positive experience. I felt listened to and that the adviser genuinely wanted to help."

The NI Covid Wellbeing Hub has a wealth of information and resources if you're struggling to stay positive: **www.covidwellbeingni.info**

age NI | HSC Public Health Agency | Age Friendly Network NI | covidwellbeing ni.info