



*Serving the needs of older people*

## Keeping connected

**E oho! Maranga mai!  
Tinihia ō kaka! Me tae mai hoki!**

**“Wake up, get up, dress up and show up!”**



Sometimes life events can mean that older people have less contact with others than they'd like.

We asked our SeniorVoice group for suggestions on ways to keep involved.

**This list of 40 tips summarises what they told us:**

### Walk the talk

- Go for a walk in your local neighbourhood every day, look around you, smile and say 'good morning/morena'
- People who have dogs like to talk about them and this can be a good conversation starter
- If you live in the city visit somewhere different everyday e.g. museum, library, the church. Have a coffee and be open to talking to others
- Make regular trips to the dairy or bakery and get to know the shop owners
- Keep up with current events through the media so that you have things to talk about
- Visit elderly neighbours, become friends and suggest an afternoon for cards, chat or to teach each other something new.

### Make cultural/spiritual links

- Visit local marae and see what's happening
- Churches and places of religious worship often have groups you can join and they may offer lifts to help you attend

### Use the phone – it's a great asset

- Find out when are good times to phone friends and family/whānau
- Form a telephone 'tree' – a group of people organise themselves so they can phone each other and spread news
- Have a phone friend you ring regularly

### Use technology

- New technology can make it easier to stay in touch with family/whānau even if they are far away
- If it's within your budget consider getting a laptop or desktop computer and a broadband connection
- Use email, messaging or Skype (free international calls which can include video so you see each other on the screen while talking)
- Libraries can provide access if you have not got a computer
- Get a mobile phone and text the grandchildren/mokopuna.

## Age Concern

- Your local Age Concern is your first port of call when you need information, advice referral or support
- They know what your local community can offer you and can help you make the links
- Ask to receive their newsletter (there may be a small membership fee). It will be packed with local news.

## Consider other clubs and groups

- Your library or community centre can also tell you the groups and activities in your area
- Free local community papers are a great source of information about what's on
- If you need transport to a group ask them about community transport or arrangements for lifts
- Marae welcome older Māori. Often there are regular social groups, trips and outings, and health and keep fit sessions
- Follow your interests: join a book club, a sewing group, a music group, a political campaign or a dance group. If there isn't one that appeals to you try setting one up
- Maintain your existing social circle and use them as a bridge to find out about activities and groups in the area. It's easier to go along if there is someone you know to introduce you.

## Get fit as well as make friends

- Join a walking group, dance class, kaumatua group, tai chi or whatever takes your fancy. There are also lots of groups for people who need gentler exercise. Ask Age Concern for information and also about transport if needed.



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## Keep learning

- To learn something new try SeniorNet, University of the Third Age or a Probus club. These provide social contact and mental stimulation
- Enrol in a course and learn something new or do something that you have always wanted to do but never got around to
- Age Concern organises talks and seminars on topics of interest, often about how to maximise your health and wellbeing
- There may be opportunities to pass on your skills such as budgeting, gardening and cooking to others through organisations like SuperGrans.

## Volunteer or gift your time

- Age Concern and other community organisations welcome voluntary help in all sorts of roles, from odd jobs to governance
- Consider becoming a volunteer visitor with Age Concern's Accredited Visitor Service and make a new friend as well as helping someone else. Or if you can't get out and about maybe Age Concern can send a visitor to you
- Ask Age Concern if there's a Men's Shed near you. These workshops make items needed in the community as well as providing a social opportunity for the members
- Offer your time to a local school. Volunteers are always welcome for walking school buses, hearing children read, or helping in the library
- Churches have health and social service groups
- Many rest homes welcome volunteers and visitors can become friends and help relieve the isolation that some residents feel.

## And last but not least...

- Live where you are near to the people, activities and facilities that are important to you.

[www.ageconcern.org.nz](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz)