

5 big benefits of using Amazon Alexa Echo



By James Spence – support worker



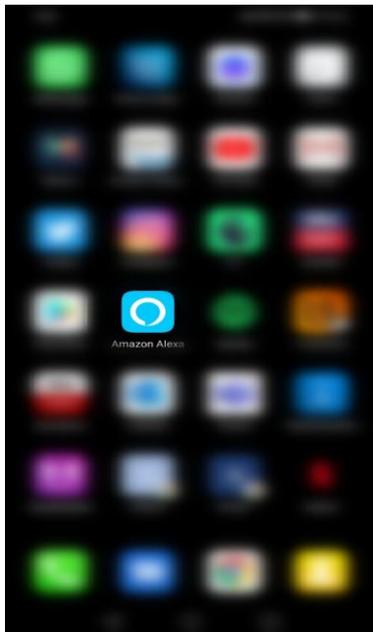
Hi, my name is James. I have been a support worker now for 3 years with Dimensions. I recently helped the young man I support in setting up his Amazon Echo Dot. I made a video on why technology, especially with Amazon Echo Dot's with Alexa voice control can help, not just in this service but many services across the country. That was successful, so now I've written this 'top 5' guide so the people you support can get the best out of Alexa. Enjoy!

It is a pictorial guide of the top 5 benefits of using Alexa Echo. I'm also developing some videos so look out for them too; good for those that aren't tech savvy – coming soon!

#Note: These instructions are based on the service buying the device, not the person.

Downloading the App

When the service has purchased the amazon device, plug it in and set it up. After this it will ask you to download the Alexa app. You can do this from the Play store on your staff phone.

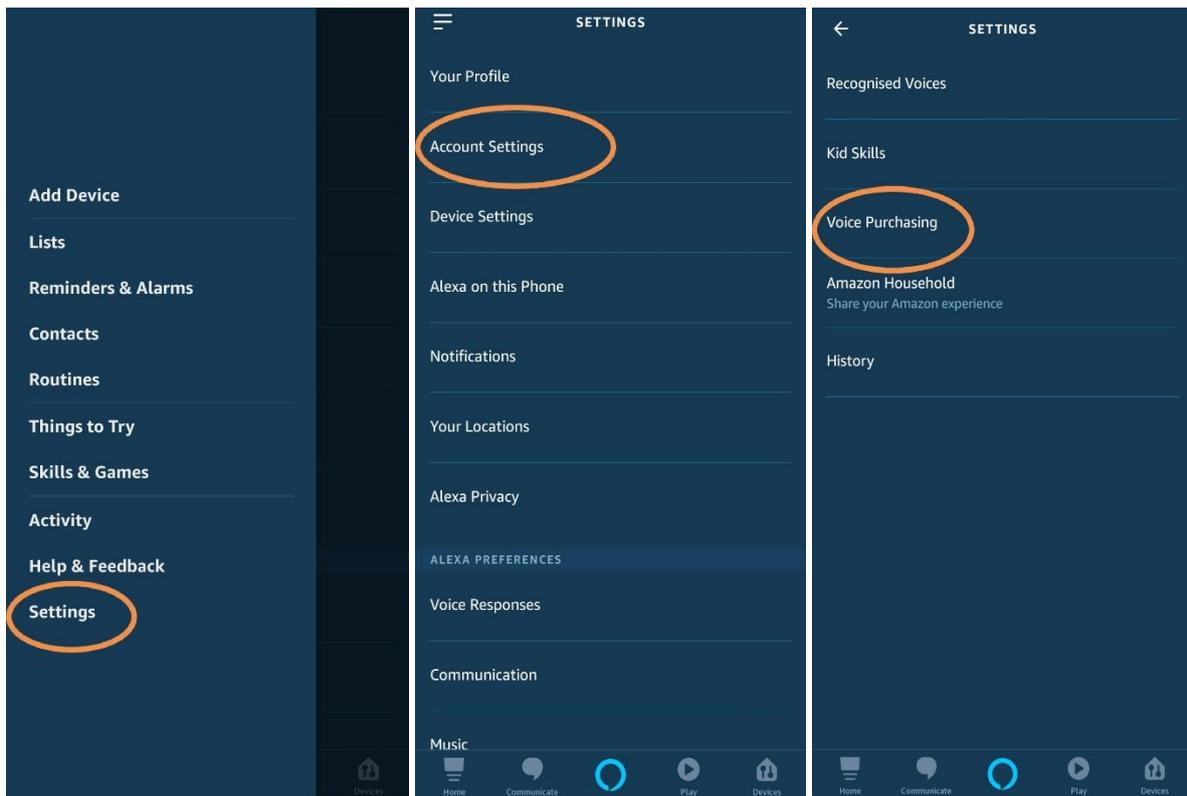


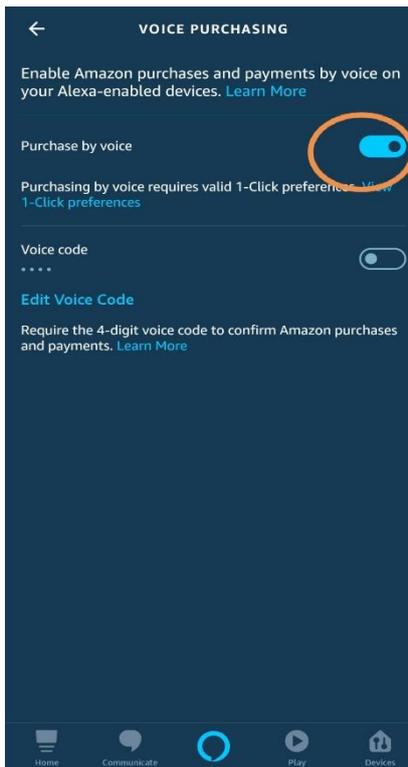
The app that is not blurred out is the correct app you will need.

Once installed you will need to add an email address, this is probably best if the Locality Manager's is used or if a family member is appointee, then it could be theirs*
Then you can add the person's whose device it is their home address.

*** Same applies if you want to add a payment Method (credit/debit card)**

There is a design on the Amazon devices, where you can 'voice purchase' items from them via Amazon Prime. Once you have set your Amazon Echo Dot up, it automatically makes the account for an Amazon Prime Account. **This can be turned off within the app – see images below.**





From Left to Right is the sequence to turn off voice control. This should avoid financial abuse if it was ever to occur. This helpfully leads on to one of the benefits for having an Echo Dot.

1. Music

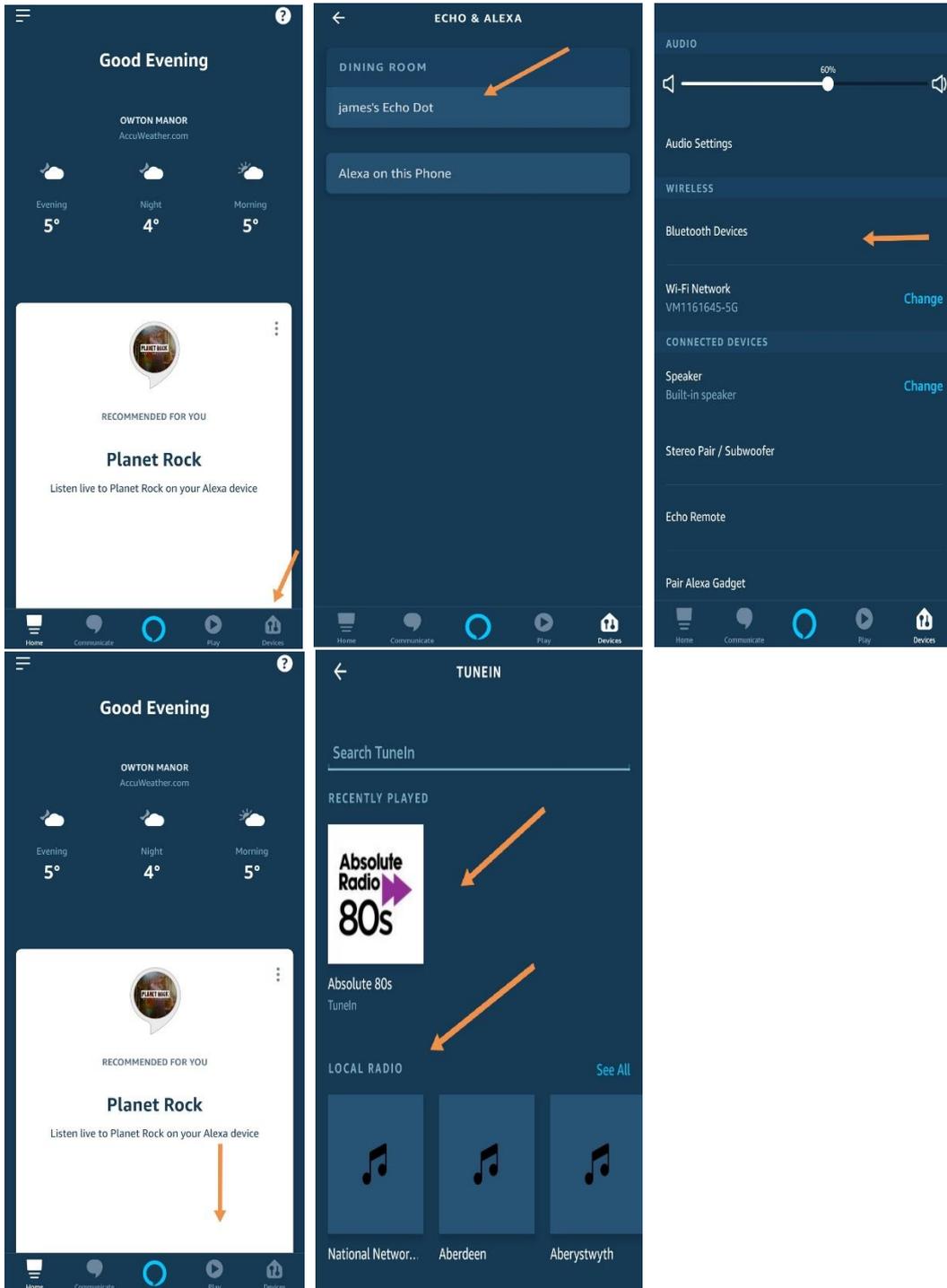


Amazon Prime music is already installed on the Echo Dot, you can have it for free but you wouldn't get a full choice of songs as certain songs are only included in Amazon prime. This costs £3.99 per month, so the locality manager or appointee would need to authorise it. The same goes for Spotify or any other music streaming service. Most can be linked to the device.

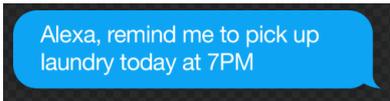
But there are two alternatives. You can pair the staff mobile phone to the Alexa Echo via Bluetooth. This will mean you can use the Alexa Echo as a wireless Bluetooth speaker. This means you can use the Youtube app for free music.

Also, there is a 'Play' button on the Alexa app on the phone. This lists all national and local radio stations which if selected will play without cost.

See images below:



2. Reminders and Alerts



This is probably my favourite benefit from using an Amazon Device in supported living. Sometimes a person in supported living is going to want a strict routine. Sometimes a person can become anxious and upset with staff if they want or expect something but staff are unaware or show signs of being unsure. With the amazon Alexa's reminders and alarms, anxieties and negative

behaviours can be reduced.

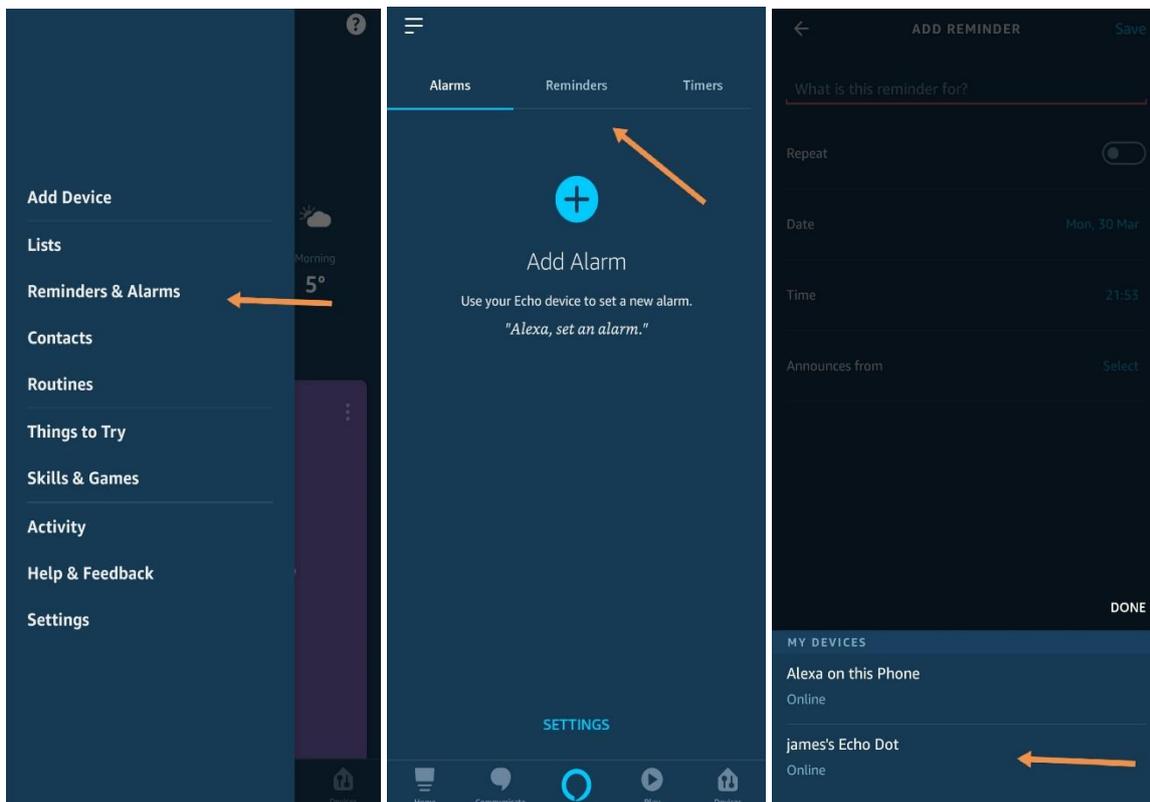
You can set reminders for medication times, bath/shower times, when to start cooking meals, when it's time to start any activity and any appointments the person may have planned. You get the gist.

If the person you support has plans and has set a time to go out at 11am you can set a reminder for the person to start getting ready at, say, 10:30am. This will help the person understand that they are going out and they can also see it as quite a bit of fun.

If the person has a medical appointment at 1:00pm setting a reminder first thing on the morning can alert the person early which may help with a positive mind-set and mental preparation.

You can do this via the Alexa App on the staff phone by selecting announcements. These will sound through the Alexa echo at the time chosen so the person can hear it. These Reminders can be set to repeat every day or a specific day, if it's an appointment. Very helpful!

See images below:

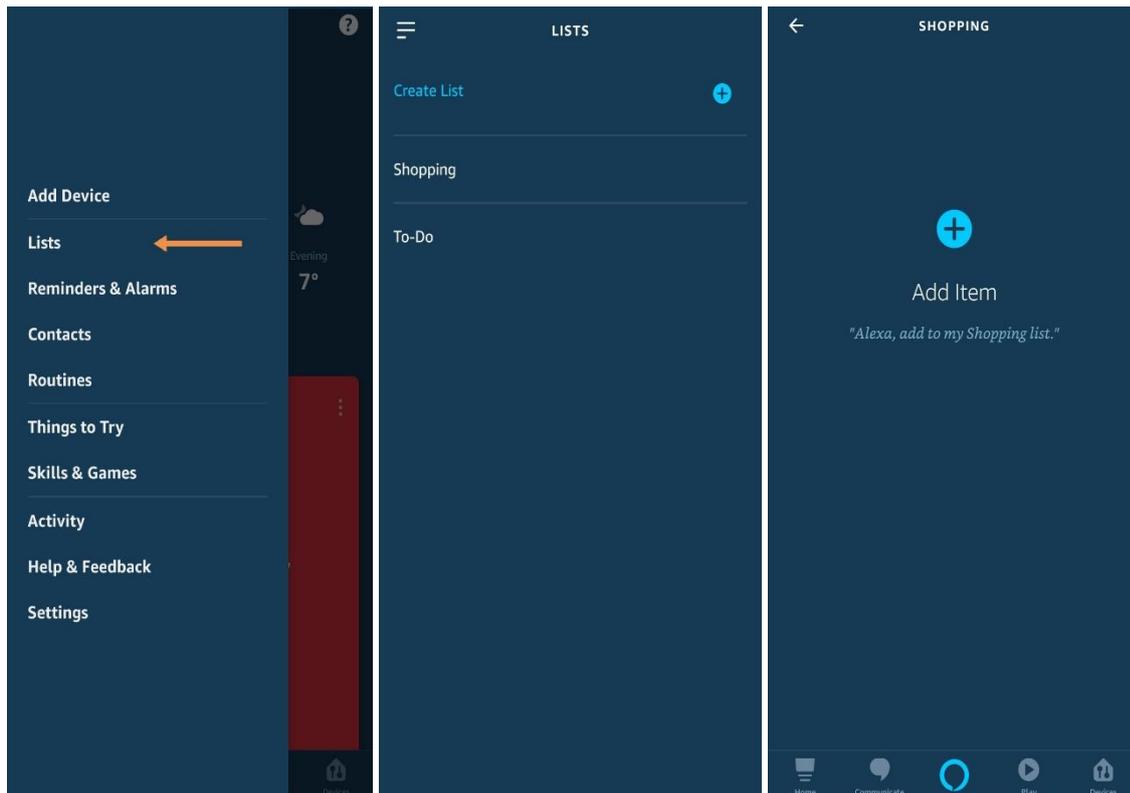


3. Creating a list



The person you support can use this feature to make a shopping list, Christmas card list, any list - whatever suits the person!

I've found that this can help the person gain more independence and self-confidence to do things.



Its pretty self-explanatory this bit. It can also be done by using voice commands – just ask Alexa to create a list and she will help you out!

5. Cooking skills, healthy eating and keeping fit at home

This is a good one for support workers and the person they support and can be added from the skills and games App.

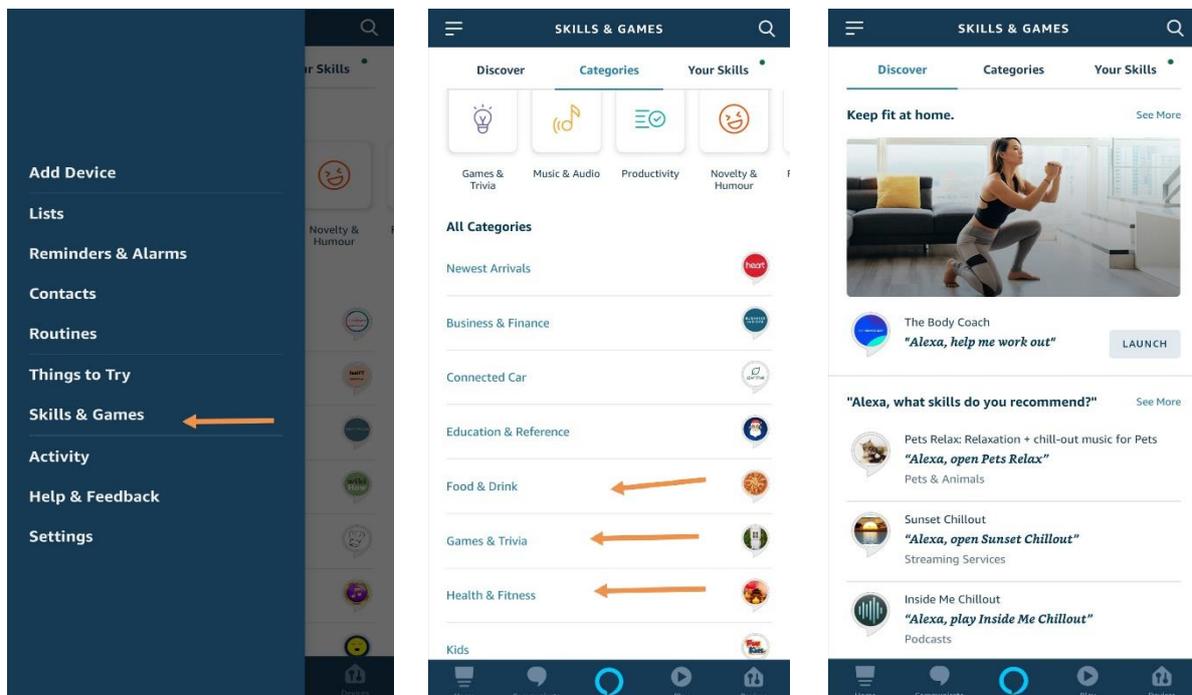
The person can ask for a recipe for whatever meal they fancy cooking up. When you ask for a recipe Alexa will list the ingredients that you will need and you can voice command to add all items to the shopping list so you know nothing is going to be forgotten.

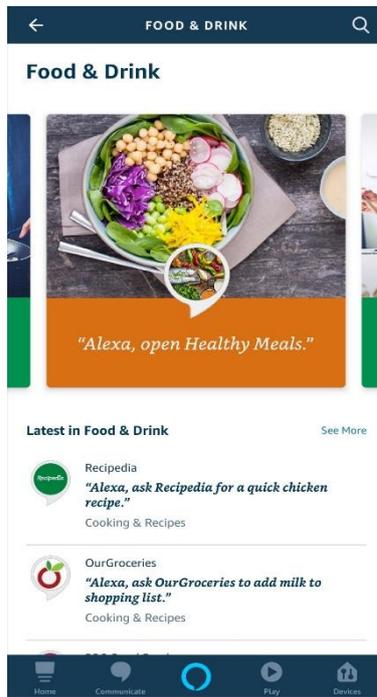
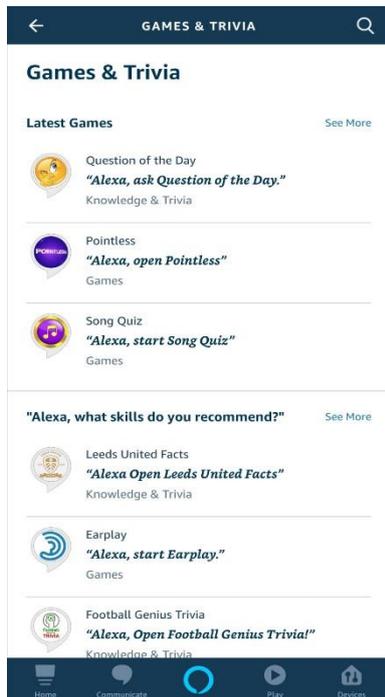
This also helps in preparing food as Alexa will also help you cook the meals like a virtual chef in a cooking lesson. This can help the person learn new cooking skills.

The keeping fits skill helps the person perform exercise routines in their own home. When this skill is enabled Alexa turns into a fitness instructor! With everything going on and country in lockdown this is a great skill to have so they can keep fit and healthy within their own home.

You can also add games and quizzes to the skills app. This can be very entertaining as Alexa acts as a quiz master. Good fun! Look out for video tutorial on this.

I will apply a tutorial video for this section also. Images below:





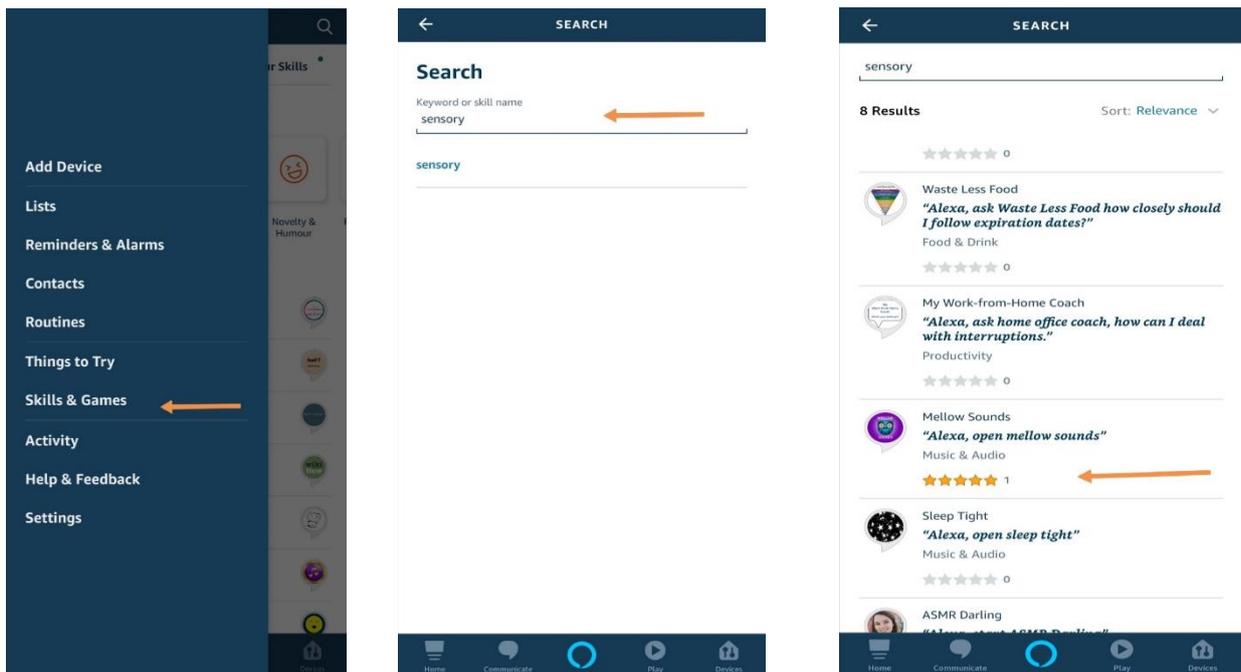
5. The sensory skill: relaxing sounds and music



We all need to relax and soothing sounds can really help create a calm environment.

You can add a skill on the App for sensory sounds and relaxing music. There is a skill on the Amazon device that you can add to play sensory sounds and relaxing music, which I've found to be great at helping people stay calm when anxiety is getting a little high or just to avoid or stave off anxiety when you think it is likely to appear.

See images below:



Thanks for reading. I hope at least 1 (or all 5) are useful to the people you support. That's what it's all about!

Look out for my video tutorials on everything covered in document. Coming soon!

Take care and stay safe.

James