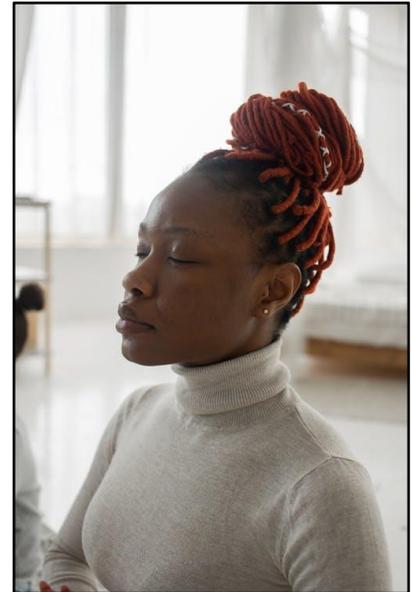




How to experience silence

Spending just two minutes in silence has been shown to lower blood pressure, cortisol levels and heart rate; while two hours in silence has been shown to refresh the body and mind and promote healthy cell growth in the hippocampus. You can seek purposeful silence by choosing different activities where you can eliminate noise to reduce stress and tension and replenish cognitive resources in the absence of sound. To enjoy total silence, consider finding a location free of any sound and just be still.

Challenge yourself for seven days to practice being silent. Start with level one and choose an activity where you can eliminate unnecessary sound. Then try level two, moving to a location where you are in the absence of sound and be still for as long as you can manage. Reflect and journal your experience each time you practice being silent.



Examples for level one: Eliminate unnecessary sound, then reflect on your experience.

- Walk or bike without listening to music or talking.
- Complete chores or yardwork without listening to music or TV.
- Drive without using the radio or phone or having conversations with passengers.
- Instead of having a conversation with someone, write notes back and forth.

Examples for level two: Eliminate sound and movement, then reflect on your experience.

- Find a room in your home that's free of sound and distractions, such as TV, music, pets, other people or outside noises. You might consider a closet or basement where you can sit quietly.
- Try a noise canceling headset to block out external noises.
- Be still if you can.

Reflection questions to ask yourself each day:

- Which level did I try, one or two?
- How did I allow myself to experience silence?
- How long was I silent?
- Did I find it difficult to be silent?