

## Music in the Office

---

I shot down some months ago a suggestion from my assistant, whom I have not yet fired, that we have a little soft music in the office. I can't see anyway that it wouldn't be distracting. Yet, the constant (and I mean freaking all day long) wail of fire engines and ambulances and taxi horns and police rumpers is already a constant interruption; I wonder if a little music is a good idea. Has anyone tried this in their office and found one way or the other a good idea or a bad idea?

---

I stream WCRB (classical) on my computer while working. I find it helps me concentrate a lot better while writing. But that's me.

Sasha Golden, Massachusetts

---

Another vote here for Classical. Many, many studies have proved its benefits. Can't actually cite a study about drowning out sirens. May have to be trial and error. I grove on Copeland, Chopin, Mussorgsky, Holst, Tchaikovsky, Saint Saens, among the Masters, and Hudi, my husbands instrumental CDs. Keeps me focused.

Lyza L. Sandgren (non-atty), Georgia

---

I'm a big fan of listening to Focus @ Will for when I'm doing work.

<https://www.focusatwill.com/>

Hope this helps!

Dave Rakowski, Pennsylvania

---

What's wrong with music if it helps people work better? Or headphones if it's close quarters and not everyone likes the same music or can work with music?

As long as the quality of the work remains high, I wouldn't care.

Sincerely,  
Dwayne Allen Thomas, New Jersey

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

I would agree; if it's me, I'm springing for some SiriusXM (lower-end subscription for my office) and locking in Watercolors and Spa. Classical tends to make me sleepy-- too many trips to my mom's doctors' offices when I was a kid, I guess \*grin\*

But especially in either high-noise (like Manhattan) or too-quiet (like rural Kansas) environs, I vote pro-music in the office. Even better if you can get a white-noise system for your front office so clients feel a bit of sanctuary from the city.

King Farris

---

I write best with instrumental jazz playing, but read better to classical.

Wendell Finner, Floria

---

If you're not familiar with Ludovico Einaudi, you might want to give him a try. Classically trained pianist who still plays a good deal of classical. But sometimes, he does an excellent job of mixing in other genres, including jazz.

Here's an example, teh youtubes have many more.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1DRDcG1SsE>

James S. Tyre, California

---

I've been using [www.focusatwill.com](http://www.focusatwill.com) during certain times of the day. It's neuroscience based music to increase your attention span.

Paul Perez

---

I go for classical at work too. Hard to concentrate with pounding lyrics. I'm partial to the Captain in the middle of the Great Basin.  
<http://www.kqmc.com/>

Craig McLaughlin, California

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

I generally don't like music when I work, I find it too distracting, but if it was choice between constant sirens or light music, I would go for the music. I'm curious as to the comment " whom I have not yet fired" Did she play music despite the fact that you had asked her not to?

Stacie Zimmerman

---

You are the boss, so it's your call and do what you're comfortable with.

Having said that, I sometimes have music streaming from my computer as does my assistant. Me mostly rock and metal, she mostly pop. We both try and keep it down so we don't hear each other's music and there are no issues.

Sometimes when I am alone in the office I will play music louder. I don't find it distracting.

You can try it and if you don't like how's it goes end it.

Robert Weiss

---

Me, I find music too distracting when I need to concentrate. That said, we played classical music in the twins bedroom (obviously turned down low) from the day they came home from the hospital until their player burned out a couple of months ago (they turned six on Halloween). It worked in keeping the all the house noises, from dogs running down the hall by their bedroom to the television playing in the next room, from waking them up. The music did not keep me from falling asleep (there is always a monitor on from their room to ours) so it must not be too distracting.

Patricia Dennis, Illinois

---

<http://8tracks.com/apothecary/no-8-shit-kicking-music> is what I've been working to lately. But anything under the Windham Hill lable or by the Grateful Dead works very well, too.

jennifer j. rose, Mexico

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

I'm one of 5 children, and all but one of us studied piano and at least 1 other instrument through college. I cannot recall a time when classical music in the background didn't help me concentrate (and very few times when it wasn't going on in the house). Actually, the biggest problem I had in college and law school was trying to study in the library, which I still find impossible given the fake silence punctuated by sibilant whispers----ugh.

The Brandenburg concertos and Mozart horn concertos are my fail-safe go-to's. I suspect that's because my oldest sister was a kick-ass horn player. ;-)

Anita Fuoss, South Dakota

---

The Brandenburg Concertos are on my "desert island" list, the only classical entry on a very eclectic list.

You know, the list of the 10 musical works I would want to have if I was stranded on a desert island for the rest of my life, had no internet access or other outside world contact, but somehow had the power to play my CD player forever. ' -)

(The rest of my list is a State Secret.)

James S. Tyre

---

Sometimes I go with quiet, sometimes music. When I listen to music, I usually pick one of my channels on Pandora.

Thank you,

Letisha Luecking Orlet, Illinois

---

For work soothing, I find anything more than a solo instrument too distracting. Mostly I play classic guitar--almost all of Segovia plus others. Agree that some classic piano may be equal. Point is beauty without much crescendo that may distract. If you catch yourself listening, its too much.

John Page, Florida

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

My office is next to the conference room.. and sadly, the sound barrier is not what it might be.

I have a play list on Spotify that is an eclectic grouping of about 20 titles... I play the list all the time, in order... which means that even though I couldn't possibly re-create the playlist off the top of my head, as one title finishes, I typically know the notes that will be coming next.... so I find myself 'hearing' the music, without actually listening to it or being distracted by it. When the conference room gets loud, it works very well to turn on my play list at a low volume. The conference room doesn't hear my music, but my music serves well as white-noise to drown out the conference room.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, at times when I'm the only one in the building (like now!) I like to have the sound, so that it's not quite so quiet in here.

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Massachusetts

---

CLEARLY the obvious choice in music.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx5n21zHPm8>

You can listen all day.

-- Amy Clark Kleinpeter, Texas

---

That remark had to do with a post I made last week complaining about my assistant and several annoying qualities she has, most irritating is complaining ("oh the phones here are so horrible!") when she knows full well I spend hours on line with VOIP tech support trying to solve the problems, and various other complaints and backhanded swipes at my practice. The consensus was to fire her, which is still on the table. My space here is very over crowded which causes stress, I don't want to add to that with music. But maybe that will reduce stress.

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

Some people work well with a bit of music in the background; others don't, they find it distracting. Personally, I do like background music; as you note it can drown out other distracting noises, but, really, I simply like it. I keep music on at the office (at low volume), some sort of Classical music; back when local Public Radio played classical, I had that on, then when they went to all talk, I had XM Pops on, and dumped that about a year or so ago when I got Ipod and listen to various public radio stations on I Heart Radio: usually either KMFA out of Austin, TX or WQXR out of NYC.

I find the classical music to be not distracting, and good 'music to work by'".

Ronald Jones, Florida

---

I have several Pandora stations that I have been cultivating for years. The ones I listen to at work are mainly the one based around the Staples Singers (which morphs into a lot of Motown and soul), and a bluegrass one based on Sam Bush. I need to start an instrumental/jazz one because I have a tendency to get distracted with the lyrics of songs I know.

T. Ryan Phillips, South Carolina

---

I'm starting to dig music in the workplace. I hear Jazz is great for creativity. Flying back from Asia, they had several stations to listen to, and the only one with anything decent was classical. Let me say I don't think I've ever been more productive when writing as I was those few hours. I mean I was churning stuff out. I'm a big fan of it. I just don't know what I should listen to. So many different songs, and composers, and you have to see who is performing them, etc. etc.

I'll probably play Jazz and Classical.

Joseph D. Dang, California

---

So, the real question is, when are you going to fire her?

It's a reasonable request. White noise in the office could reduce stress. But she's already damaged her credibility with you.

Betsy Brazy California

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

Everyone is different on this issue. I cannot stand background music and would not be able to concentrate. It is akin to having a TV playing in the background while I am trying to write a legal memo. Not for me.

Amy A. Long, Virginia

---

I stream Pandora jazz at my desk - but I don't have others in this office very often. If I did I might opt for headphones out of courtesy. I think music is a very individual thing.

I can't do music with lyrics though - too distracting. Instrumentals only when I'm trying to work.

Disclaimer: Not a lawyer, nor a musician.

Ben M. Schorr, Arizona

---

I know what you mean. Although, oddly enough, I find jazz too distracting. I want to stop and listen to it.

The best music I have for working is Baroque or Classical, and by Classical, I mean from that period after the Baroque period until the late 1700's. The Romantics are wonderful but I find them way too distracting for work. There's a symmetry and precision in Baroque and Classical that actually helps a person order their thoughts, if that makes any sense. There's no way I can listen to, say, Beethoven without stopping and focusing on the music.

Anita Fuoss

---

Yes. Isn't new age music as peaceful?

Craig McLaughlin

---

Any noise other than white noise is a total distraction for me. If I had to work in an office with background music, I'd have to do my work in a library.

Mike Phillips, North Carolina

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

Earbuds. Problem solved.

Also, Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

Gabriel W. Scott, Alaska

---

I wish that were true.

Mike Phillips

---

I too generally don't like music in the office. But the walls of my office are not soundproof and when I can hear my neighbors on speaker or in meetings and they are showing no consideration for me.... They can expect to hear Springsteen coming from my desk

;)   
 Susan Zinder, New York

---

First time I ever heard of Springsteen as some kind of payback. You are welcome to punish me as much as you like!

Duke Drouillard, Nebraska

---

I have a couple of Pandora stations.

I can get slight variations on my Irish music with: Flogging Molly, Darby O'Gill or the Pogues.

To mix things up, I occasionally play 10,000 Maniacs or Gipsy Kings. And, if I'm having trouble concentrating with any of those stations, I'll play Mozart or Rachmaninov.

Now, I think I've said too much. ;-)

Cheers,

David Allen Hiersekorn, California

---



## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

I have a pair of Grado SR60s and Spotify premium that seems to solve the office music problem. I don't listen so loudly that I cannot hear phones and people, but just enough to where the everyday noise of the office is crowded out. The open-channel design of the Grados helps with that, plus they're otherwise fantastic cans.

Jonathan A. Watson, Michigan

---

FROM NYT FRONT PAGE, 1938:

GE labs has recently announced an amazing invention referred to as "ear speakers," "cranial biaxial sound projection boxes," "phnrenology bumps that make noise," or, for the uninitiated, "headphones."

With this wondrous invention, it is no longer necessary for everyone to listen to music. In fact, it is rumored that one person can listen to quiet music of their choice while another person in the same room listens to \*different\* music--surely a sign of our modern age.

The editors note that while the ear speakers are still the size of a large guinea pig and weigh 12 pounds each complete with tubes, they are nonetheless smaller and cheaper than individual string quartets.

Erik Hammarlund, MAAssachusetts

---

Just turned on Snowy Morning Blues by Howard Alden, hoping it will turn this rain to snow. I LOVE music at work. But I keep it low so you can't hear it outside my office and always turn it off if I have someone in the office, or am on more than a very short call. And don't have it on every day. But when things get stressful, I like classical, jazz or even that new age relaxation stuff. If I don't have anything mentally taxing going on, I will even listen to rock / folk / singer-songwriter, but do tend to get lost in the lyrics when I do that.

Nanci Bockelie, Utah

---

I, too, have a couple of Pandora stations. I find turning on the music gets the phone to ring.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

---

Here's your solution. :-)

Tell your assistant that music is permitted so long as it is a minimalist (like the composer James linked to above). No lyrics, no complex melodies ... just something to listen to other than traffic.

Here are a couple groups from one of my Pandora stations:

Dallas String Quartet  
2cellos  
Penguin Cafe Orchestra  
Phillip Glass  
Ennio Morricone

--

Joshua Smith, Idaho

---

Music definitely engages the part of my brain that wants to wander when I'm working on something a little rote or tedious.

I'm not sure how I'd feel about music that everyone in the office has to listen to, but if everyone's on-board I don't see why not. If your clients can hear it might also be somewhat soothing for them.

Alexander Wolfe

---

As far back as law school, I found silence deafening. In fact, there is very little true silence, anyway. In particular, the lights in the law library made a truly annoying buzz, but there are always random noises intruding into silence.

I have always used music as my preferred background noise, but it must be familiar music that I can tune out in my head when necessary, but provides a little pick-me-up when I don't have to concentrate.

So, I have 4,927 songs on random play on my iPod (more during the holidays). It is a good mix of classical, rock, pop, choral, and jazz.

When I worked in places where the same music would be on for everyone, it needed to be classical.

Timothy A. Gutknecht, Illinois

---

## SoloSez Popular Threads, February 2014

---

Everyone's taste in music so why not let her play her own music at her desk? As long as it's not too loud and doesn't distract others at work I don't see the harm.

I certainly work better when I'm listening to music, but that's just me.

Brian Ayson

---

I do contract work, mainly from home. Thus, when writing I switch between Classical, Best of Sade on Youtube, and Bossa Nova (Eliane Elias station on Pandora).

When I volunteered at a downtown DV Restraining Order Clinic, the staff attorney always had smooth jazz to calm clients.

Sincerely,

Susana Beltrán, California

---

iHeart Radio has a great selection of radio stations. There's an app for that, too. (At least an iPad app.)

Frances Springer, Mississippi

---

I, too, find music of all kinds to be a distraction, so I don't like it in my own work area. I'm apparently a pretty active listener with music. Sirens and dogs barking and trains going by don't distract me nearly as much as music does. We don't have music in our reception area, but we also don't typically make people wait too long, either. If it is in reception, I think you need something pretty universally non-offensive.

I've had employees, however, who have played music at their workstation. Fine with me as long as others around don't find it distracting. A former employee who was very efficient liked to play music at her desk.

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

---