

Quiet Hour

Audio Program
Transcript and Tools

An Easy Way to Reduce
Stress and Feel Inner
Peace Outside



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TRANSCRIPT



Introduction

Welcome to the Quiet Hour audio program. We're glad you're here. Here you'll discover a one-of-a-kind way to relax in nature. It's easy for everyone and can be done in any natural spot in as few as 15 minutes. This audio program has two main parts.

In the first part, you'll learn about Quiet Hour, the problem it helps solve, what Quiet Hour is, its benefits for you, suggestions for where and when to practice it, and for handling challenges that might happen.

In the second part, you'll experience the Quiet Hour process. You can listen along to it outdoors in your choice of three different lengths. Quiet Quarter-Hour, Quiet Half-Hour, or Hour. They all have the same steps, just different timing in each step.

Also, Quiet Quarter-Hour has fewer suggestions in each step. So let's begin by learning about Quiet Hour.

Today's Noise and Stress Problem

Rumbling traffic, blaring car alarms, pinging message alerts, upsetting twenty-four-hour news—today we are more bombarded with noise and stress than ever. We might try to ignore them or get used to them, but they take a bigger toll on us than we realize.

They are such a problem that the World Health Organization considers noise from traffic one of the worst environmental stressors for humans and calls stress the health epidemic of the twenty-first century.

Chronic noise causes stress, which in turn causes health problems. In fact, as published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, and other sources, research shows that health risks of chronic noise exposure may include:

- Increased stress hormones
- Sleep disturbance
- Hearing impairment and tinnitus
- Triggers for people with post-traumatic stress disorder
- Changes in the immune system
- Hypertension and ischemic heart disease
- Diabetes
- Aggression, violence, and other anti-social behaviors
- Anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric disorders
- Birth defects
- Early death (In the EU, noise is considered a factor in ~10,000 deaths per year.)

An Appealing Solution

To reduce the impact of noise and stress, we might be tempted to hide out and wear ear plugs all the time. But there is a more appealing solution: quiet breaks in natural settings. Research study after study shows exposure to quiet and nature reduces stress. In fact, this has been confirmed in well over a hundred studies.

For example, research shows people who spend at least two hours in nature each week report significantly better health and well-being.

Publications by the American Heart Association, the American Psychological Association, and other sources reveal that some benefits of time in nature may include:

- Reduced stress/mental distress
- Decreased anxiety and depression
- Better mood/happiness
- Increased energy

- Improved heart health
- Increased positive social interactions
- Better self-esteem and concentration
- Increased memory, creativity, and work satisfaction
- Increased sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose in life
- Living longer

Plus, research indicates nature can meet psychological and emotional needs that are difficult to meet any other way.

But, in today's noisy, hectic, high-tech world, these benefits are out of reach for most people.

That's where Quiet Hour comes in. It can help bridge this gap and bring the benefits of quiet and nature to many more people.

What Is Quiet Hour?

It's an easy way to reduce stress and feel inner peace outside. Unlike most outdoor activities, it's not about learning a skill or information. It's about enjoying nature as a refuge from the pressures of modern life. It makes getting the benefits of quiet and nature easy.

The program is based on a simple, 4-step process of:

1. Center
2. Breathe
3. Notice
4. Appreciate

Woven into this process are nine techniques or influences that research indicates have a calming or uplifting effect, including:

1. Exposure to Nature
2. Hearing Quiet and Natural Sounds
3. Pausing Electronic Device Use
4. Earthing/Grounding
(directly touching the earth)
5. Extended Exhale Breathing
(breathing out longer than breathing in)
6. Sensory Awareness (noticing sensations)
7. Effortless Attention/Soft Fascination
(being aware without having to concentrate)
8. Opportunities for Awe
(chances to feel wonder or amazement)
9. Gratitude

Benefits for You

Quiet Hour is unique and easy to do. Basically, you follow some simple steps and nature does the rest.

- It's done seated or lying down.
- It's multi-sensory, so it's for people of all abilities, really everyone.
- You can practice it alone or with others, although the 60-minute version is best done with people ages 12 and older.
- It gives you a new way to experience nature, not by learning about it, playing in it, or exercising in it, but by feeling inner peace in it.
- While you might have felt this by chance on your own a few times, Quiet Hour gives you a structured, guided way to feel it often.
- It lets you turn any natural spot into a stress relief and mental wellness resource, where you can relax, replenish, and savor being alive on our wonderful planet.
- It's flexible, you can enjoy it in any natural spot, in any season, at any time of day or evening, and for either a quarter hour, half hour, or full hour.
- It's one of a kind and potentially transformative.
- It's a tool you can use often to manage stress and feel connected with nature for the rest of your life.

Choosing a Location and Time

You can practice Quiet Hour in any natural spot that's convenient for you.

This could be a park, a natural spot outside where you work, or your home's yard or balcony. If you can't get outdoors, you might try it near an open window facing a natural area. You can choose any natural spot, but here are some features to look for.

It's ideal if the spot is relatively quiet and natural. You'll have a better experience away from human-made noise like traffic and with more biodiversity than, say, a sports field. It's good if the spot is easy to get to.

Also, you could sit on the ground, but if you'd rather not, it's good if the spot has some seating, like a bench, or you could bring a folding chair. It's good if there's a restroom relatively close, so you can use it beforehand and be comfortable during the session.

It's an extra bonus if the spot is by water. Water tends to be soothing, attracts wildlife like birds, and makes the spot interesting. A spot doesn't have to have all these features, it's just nice if it does.

Do the best you can with what's near you. What if you have trouble finding a spot or you'd like to try a new one? You can search for natural spots on websites like [alltrails.com](https://www.alltrails.com), [discovertheforest.org](https://www.discovertheforest.org), and [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

These locators are mostly in the US. If you're in another country, an online search should help you find similar locators for that country. As for timing, you can practice Quiet Hour at any time. It's especially nice at sunrise and sunset with their beautiful colors and changing conditions.

It's also nice to try it at different times of day or during different seasons. In terms of length, first you might start with quiet quarter hour, then if you like, over time you can gradually build up to the longer versions.

Again, they all have the same steps, just different timing in each step, and quiet quarter hour has fewer sub-steps. The most important thing is to do the process where and when it's comfortable and convenient for you.

That way, you'll be more likely to practice it often and enjoy the benefits long-term.

Handling Potential Challenges

During your Quiet Hour sessions, if challenges happen, feel free to pause the recording, handle them, then continue the recording when you're ready.

If the following specific challenges happen, handle them using your best judgment or these suggestions. If there is human-made background noise, it helps to realize that often stress comes from resisting what is.

To reduce that stress, we can relax our resistance to the sound and shift our focus to more pleasant natural sounds. Also, humans are part of nature too, and we can let their sounds blend with the other sounds.

If there is unpleasant weather, the suggestion is similar. Again, it helps to realize that often, stress comes from resisting what is. To reduce that stress, we can relax our resistance to the weather and shift our focus to something positive about it.

For example, wind can be uncomfortable, but also refreshing. Of course, if the noise or weather are extreme, you can stop and try again later. If you feel restless, feel free to stretch a bit. You're welcome to turn and face a different direction.

If you like, extend your exhale for a few more breaths. Maybe imagine you're a toddler, experiencing a place like this for the first time, with wonder and delight. Then continue where you were before the break.

If you lost time handling challenges and want to make it up, you can shorten the longest step. It's about two-thirds of the way through. It invites you to notice it all, and relax, and just be. So that's what Quiet Hour is all about.

In the next part of this program, you'll experience it. You can listen along to it in a natural spot, in your choice of quiet quarter hour, half hour, or hour. We hope you enjoy it.

Guided Experiences

[Note: What is written inside brackets is not spoken in the audio, but are notes to help you understand this document. In the guidance below, use the timing in the brackets to keep you on track. Pause after each suggestion as appropriate, do the suggestion, then go to the next one.]

Quiet Quarter-Hour

Welcome. Feel free to bring anything you might need for your safety or comfort to a natural spot.

[Agreements, ~0 min.] On the device you're listening with, it's best to close all other programs and apps and turn off all notifications and message alerts.

So you can hear the natural sounds around you, please listen to this with the device's main speaker or only one earbud, not both or headphones. It's also best to place the device screen side down, turn away from it, and don't use it for anything else during the session, unless something is urgent.

If you're with anyone else, it's best to agree not to talk during the session, unless something is urgent. Everything else in the session is optional.

[Get Comfortable, ~1.5 min.] You can sit up on something, on the ground, or lie down. If you like, you can rest your hands on the ground or take your shoes and socks off and rest your bare feet on the ground. Feel free to settle in and relax.

[Center, ~1.5 min.] Feel free to let everything else in your life pause. For now, you can let it all go. Here and now, you can rest.

[Breathe, ~1.5 min.] Now, you might become aware of your breathing. You might gently extend your exhale, like inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. You can keep breathing this way on your own.

[Notice—Feeling, ~1.5 min.] You might notice what your body is feeling. Maybe feel your seat or the ground supporting you. Maybe feel the air.

[Notice—Seeing, ~1.5 min.] Feel free to notice what you're seeing. What do you see nearby? What do you see further away?

[Notice—Hearing, ~1.5 min.] You might notice what you're hearing. In between the sounds, can you hear quiet?

[Notice—Smelling, ~1.5 min.] You might notice what you're smelling. If there are some natural things beside you, feel free to smell them.

[Notice—It All, ~3 min.] Maybe notice it all together, the whole natural system here. Let your awareness open and expand. You can relax and just be.

[Appreciate, ~1.5 min.] Now, you might feel grateful for something here, maybe the fresh air or the quiet. Lastly, maybe appreciate yourself for taking time to do this process.

Well done.

Quiet Half-Hour

Welcome. Feel free to bring anything you might need for your safety or comfort to a natural spot.

[Agreements, ~1 min.] On the device you're listening with, it's best to close all other programs and apps and turn off all notifications and message alerts.

So you can hear the natural sounds around you, please listen to this with the device's main speaker or only one earbud, not both or headphones. It's also best to place the device screen side down, turn away from it, and don't use it for anything else during the session, unless something is urgent.

If you're with anyone else, it's best to agree not to talk during the session, unless something is urgent. Everything else in the session is optional.

[Get Comfortable, ~3 min.] You can sit up on something, on the ground, or lie down. If you like, you can rest your hands on the ground or take your shoes and socks off and rest your bare feet on the ground. Feel free to settle in and relax.

[Center, ~3 min.] Welcome to here and now. Feel free to let everything else in your life pause. For now, you can let it all go. Maybe imagine your stress evaporating into the air. Here and now, you can rest.

[Breathe, ~3 min.] Now, you might become aware of your breathing. You might gently extend your exhale, like inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. You can keep breathing this way on your own.

[Notice—Feeling, ~3 min.] You might notice what your body is feeling. Maybe feel your seat or the ground supporting you. Maybe feel the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to feel them.

[Notice—Seeing, ~3 min.] Feel free to notice what you're seeing. What colors and objects are here? What do you see nearby? What do you see further away?

[Notice—Hearing, ~3 min.] You might notice what you're hearing. What are the main sounds? What are the quieter sounds? In between the sounds, can you hear quiet?

[Notice—Smelling, ~3 min.] You might notice what you're smelling. Maybe keep smelling the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to smell them.

[Notice—It All, ~5 min.] Maybe notice it all together, the whole natural system here. Let your awareness open and expand. You can relax and just be. We'll be in this step longer than the others, so you can relax and just be. If you like, can you relax 10% more?

[Appreciate, ~3 min.] Now, you might feel grateful for something here, maybe the fresh air or the quiet. You might appreciate it all, everything here that added to your experience. Lastly, maybe appreciate yourself for taking time to do this process.

Well done.

Quiet Hour

Welcome. Feel free to bring anything you might need for your safety or comfort to a natural spot.

[Agreements, ~2 min.] On the device you're listening with, it's best to close all other programs and apps and turn off all notifications and message alerts.

So you can hear the natural sounds around you, please listen to this with the device's main speaker or only one earbud, not both or headphones. It's also best to place the device screen side down, turn away from it, and don't use it for anything else during the session, unless something is urgent.

If you're with anyone else, it's best to agree not to talk during the session, unless something is urgent. Everything else in the session is optional.

[Get Comfortable, ~6 min.] You can sit up on something, on the ground, or lie down. If you like, you can rest your hands on the ground or take your shoes and socks off and rest your bare feet on the ground. Feel free to settle in and relax.

[Center, ~6 min.] Welcome to here and now. Feel free to let everything else in your life pause. For now, you can let it all go. Maybe imagine your stress evaporating into the air. Here and now, you can rest.

[Breathe, ~6 min.] Now, you might become aware of your breathing. You might gently extend your exhale, like inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. You can keep breathing this way on your own.

[Notice—Feeling, ~6 min.] You might notice what your body is feeling. Maybe feel your seat or the ground supporting you. Maybe feel the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to feel them.

[Notice—Seeing, ~6 min.] Feel free to notice what you're seeing. What colors and objects are here? What do you see nearby? What do you see further away?

[Notice—Hearing, ~6 min.] You might notice what you're hearing. What are the main sounds? What are the quieter sounds? In between the sounds, can you hear quiet?

[Notice—Smelling, ~6 min.] You might notice what you're smelling. Maybe keep smelling the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to smell them.

[Notice—It All, ~10 min.] Maybe notice it all together, the whole natural system here. Let your awareness open and expand. You can relax and just be. We'll be in this step longer than the others, so you can relax and just be. If you like, can you relax 10% more?

[Appreciate, ~6 min.] Now, you might feel grateful for something here, maybe the fresh air or the quiet. You might appreciate it all, everything here that added to your experience. Lastly, maybe appreciate yourself for taking time to do this process.

Well done.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS



Summary Cards

If/when you can't do sessions along with the audio program, you can do them with one of the following cards of your choice. They summarize the main steps of the process. The one below is small and simple. The one on the next page is larger and more detailed.

To make either card, print or photocopy it on cardstock and cut it out. Then, to make it more durable, feel free to laminate it.

Simple Card



Quiet Hour Process			
Step	~Minutes/Step		
	¼ hr.	½ hr.	1 hr.
Agreements	0	1	2
Get Comfortable	1.5	3	6
Center	1.5	3	6
Breathe	1.5	3	6
Notice—Feeling	1.5	3	6
Notice—Seeing	1.5	3	6
Notice—Hearing	1.5	3	6
Notice—Smelling	1.5	3	6
Notice—It All	3	5	10
Appreciate	1.5	3	6

Detailed Card



Quiet Hour Process

In a quiet, natural spot, feel free to...

1. Pause using electronic devices and talking.
2. Sit or lie down. Maybe rest your hands or bare feet on the ground.
3. Let everything else go. Rest here.
4. Notice your breathing. Maybe extend your exhale.
5. Notice what your body is feeling.
6. Notice what you're seeing.
7. Notice what you're hearing.
8. Notice what you're smelling.
9. Notice it all together. Relax.
10. Appreciate the spot and yourself.

~Minutes per Step

Step	¼ hr.	½ hr.	1 hr.
1	0	1	2
All but 9	1.5 ea.	3 ea.	6 ea.
9	3	5	10

