BOOST YOUR WORK

KILL THE NOISE AND USE MUSIC

BOOST YOU WORK!

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Welcome to "Boost your work – Kill the noise and use music"!

Through five modules, this online course will teach you how sound or noise affects you at work. Rooted in scientific research, you will learn how to use the positive effects of sound.

You will learn
- Why it is important to control office noise and do something about it
- How to implement music to increase efficiency and concentration at work
- How to implement music to decrease stress and enhance your mood.

I look forward to guiding you into a new world of knowledge that – even though I have been working with music and sound for over 25 years – took me by surprise.

I hope you enjoy the course!

Simon Kirk Nissen

MindMovingMusic – www.mindmovingmusic.dk

How to take the course

CONTENT

The course consists of 5 video modules and this workbook. I recommend downloading and printing the workbook before starting the course.

The modules are arranged like this:

- **Background knowledge** – Just lean back and watch
- **Weekly exercise** – Short video guide with a very simple exercise
- **Tips&Tricks** – Ultrashort video snippets, on how to find music fast e.g.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE COURSE?

The course is online so you can access it everywhere: From your laptop, tablet or smartphone – or you can download the materials and take the course offline.

As soon as you sign up you will have access to the first course module. The following four modules will be released weekly. You will receive a notification in your inbox when they do. (Remember to check your spam folder).

The course is only available for the period of 4th November, 2019 to 3rd November 2020 so you need to finish the last module before then.

HOW DO I USE THIS WORKBOOK?

The workbook contains both the most important takeaways from the video lectures and instructions to weekly exercises on how to implement the things you learn.

Print the different task tables from the workbook – you need them to complete the weekly exercises.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

Every week you will need to spend approx. 30 minutes to:

- Watch the weekly video – 15-20 minutes.
- Prepare and do the weekly exercise – approx. 15 minutes.
- Optional: Watch the short tips&tricks videos.

You can do most of the weekly exercises while you work.

CAN I SHARE THE COURSE CONTENT?

No. The course content is available for you only and access is personal. It is simply unfair to other people with paid access to the course if you share the content (login, workbook, videos etc.)

> I recommend getting a Spotify account for the weekly exercises. See how to sign up on the next page.

Get a Spotify account

SPOTIFY AS A MUSIC-FINDING TOOL

For the weekly exercises of the course, I will show you how to make use of Spotify as a fast and easy tool for finding music.

I recommend signing up for a Spotify account before starting the course, if you do not have one already. Try a three-month trial period of the Premium Account. It is commercial-free and gives you access to downloading playlists for offline use as well.

HOW DO I GET A SPOTIFY ACCOUNT?

Go to www.spotify.com.
Press "Get Spotify Free" or "Get Spotify Premium". You will be guided through the rest of the process.

ATTENTION! Naturally you can choose Tidal, YouSee, Apple Music or other services you prefer, but some of the tips and tricks you will get are only available on Spotify.

MODULE 1

KILL
THE
NOISE

> *Working in an open-space office environment is noisy:*
> *It makes you less productive (67%), ruins concentration (60%), increases sick leave (62%) and the amount of errors (35%).*

Module 1

Control the noise

It is time to control the noise in your office!

STEP 1: WHAT IS DISTURBING YOU?

Print Table A. Place it on your desk, pop your ears open and start noticing the sounds in your office. Take notes in Table A:

What is disturbing you? Give it a score of 1-10 (10 is very disturbing).

STEP 2: HOW CAN IT BE CHANGED?

In Table A, write down an ultra-short action statement on how to get rid of the noise and who should be involved in this action for change. You, your colleagues, the management?

An example of what Table A might look like after three days, are on the following pages.

STEP 3: TAKE ACTION!

After three to four days of registering the noise in the office it is time for action.

Look at the list and decide the single-most important thing YOU can do as a first step to lower the noise in the office.

Write it down as an action-step below Table A. Then commit to doing it!

We'll get back to the rest that needs to change in Module 5.

EXAMPLE – TABLE A

What is disturbing?	How disturbing? (1-10)	Action?	Who needs to be involved?
The air vent	10 (!)	Replace air vent! Put on noise cancelling headphones	The management Me
Small talk in the office	8-9	Put on noise cancelling headphones New office rules – stop informal desk meetings Get carpets, plants and noise-absorbing plates in the ceiling + between desks	Me! Just need to buy them My colleagues Management
Notifications on my phone	7	Turn it off	Me
Ringtones	8	Silent mode while in the office? You can always call back….	Colleagues
High heels in the office	6	Ask colleague to wear soft shoes Get carpets in the office	Colleague Management

ACTION STEP:

Google "Noise cancelling headphones" – decide where to buy them. Today!.

TABLE A

What is disturbing?	How disturbing? (1-10)	Action	Who needs to be involved?

ACTION STEP: _____

Changes to lower office noise

Below are a few suggestions for changes to lower the office noise.

WHAT YOU CAN CHANGE

Buy noise cancelling headphones, mute the phone (call back), take phone calls in another room, work from home, buy soft shoes, turn off computer sound etc.

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES CAN CHANGE

Same as above + avoid small talk and informal desk meetings, only have meetings in dedicated areas, throw out the radio…

WHAT THE MANAGEMENT CAN CHANGE

Lay carpets, buy plants (they absorb sound), install acoustic regulationor sound masking (passive or active), buy noiseless computer keyboards, install silent room, fix the damn ventilator etc.

MUSIC AND EFFICIENCY

Module 2

MUSIC AND EFFICIENCY

Apply music to boost work efficiency

Listening to music while working is scientifically proven to boost work efficiency. Music can even make you smarter by preparing your brain before solving cognitively demanding tasks.

STEP 1: BUILD A WORK EFFICIENCY PLAYLIST

Take the easy way out and choose five to ten songs you know well and will enjoy listening to - or use what you've just learned to construct a playlist with a more specific effect:

- "Mood-booster" – music enticing a happy feeling
- "Elegant Monday"– music inducing an elegant and classy feeling
- "Trip down memory lane" – music releasing good memories
- "Kick in the butt" – music providing you energy.

ATTENTION! The weekly exercise is not about constructing this first playlist, but how you react to it. So do not spend too much time constructing it.

TIP! Watch the ultra-short video to learn how to create a playlist and find music fast.

" *There is evidence that listening to preferred music makes surgeons work faster with less errors - while IT-developers generate more creative and useful ideas.*

STEP 2: TEST THE PLAYLIST

Now it is time to get back to work.

Listen to the playlist you just constructed while you work and do this for at least 15 minutes. Then take notes in Table B. How well did the playlist boost your work efficiency? Also note when and why the playlist did not help..

Write down the task you were working on, give a score from 1-10 as to how the music helped (or did not!) and comment why in Table B.
10 is the most efficient.

We will follow up on the results in Module 3.

EXAMPLE – TABLE B

Task	Score (1-10)	Comment
Copy/pasting numbers on spreadsheet	10	Time flew while working. Seemed like I worked much faster.
Writing report conclusion	1-2	Totally disturbed my concentration
Monday-morning mail-checking	9	Boosted my mood and got me started

TABLE B

Task	Score (1-10)	Comment

STEP 2: START YOUR "PICK-ME-UP" PLAYLIST

The "Pick-me-up" playlist is your own *Mozart-effect,* preparing your brain before working.

You will need it for the exercises in Module 3, and because there is a big chance you will find music in the "Work Efficiency" playlist that fits the "Pick-me-up" playlist, we will start working on it now.

You might discover tracks like these while listening this week: Music sending shivers down your spine, giving you goosebumps, a lump in the throat or making you want to sing or shout. In general music that moves you more than average (potentially releasing a good shot of dopamine).

Move songs like this to the "Pick-me-up" playlist and find replacements for the Work Efficiency list. The "Pick-me-up" playlist needs to be quite short. Only 10-15 mins. of music (three to five tracks).

MY PICK-ME-UP PLAYLIST

1:

2:

3:

4:

5:

We will finish the "Pick-me-up" playlist and start using it in Module 3.

> **"** The most important parameter to apply music to boost work efficiency is to choose music YOU like.

MUSIC
AND
CONCENTRATION

Module 3

MUSIC AND CONCENTRATION

Implement music for concentration

MUSIC – A PLEASANT KIND OF NOISE

You need a little noise to concentrate. Noise regulates the effect of dopamine. Dopamine is needed to turn on the parts of your brain which you use for concentrating and cognitively demanding tasks.

This noise might as well be pleasant – like music. But you need to be careful how much bandwidth the music takes up and remember this: we do not tolerate the same amount of noise.

It is time to look in to how you can use music to increase your concentration.

CONCLUSION – MUSIC AND EFFICIENCY

Take a short look at your notes in Table B from last week and write down how the playlist worked:

How did music generally help you boost work efficiency?

Give it a score between 1 and 10 (where 10 is very helpful):_____

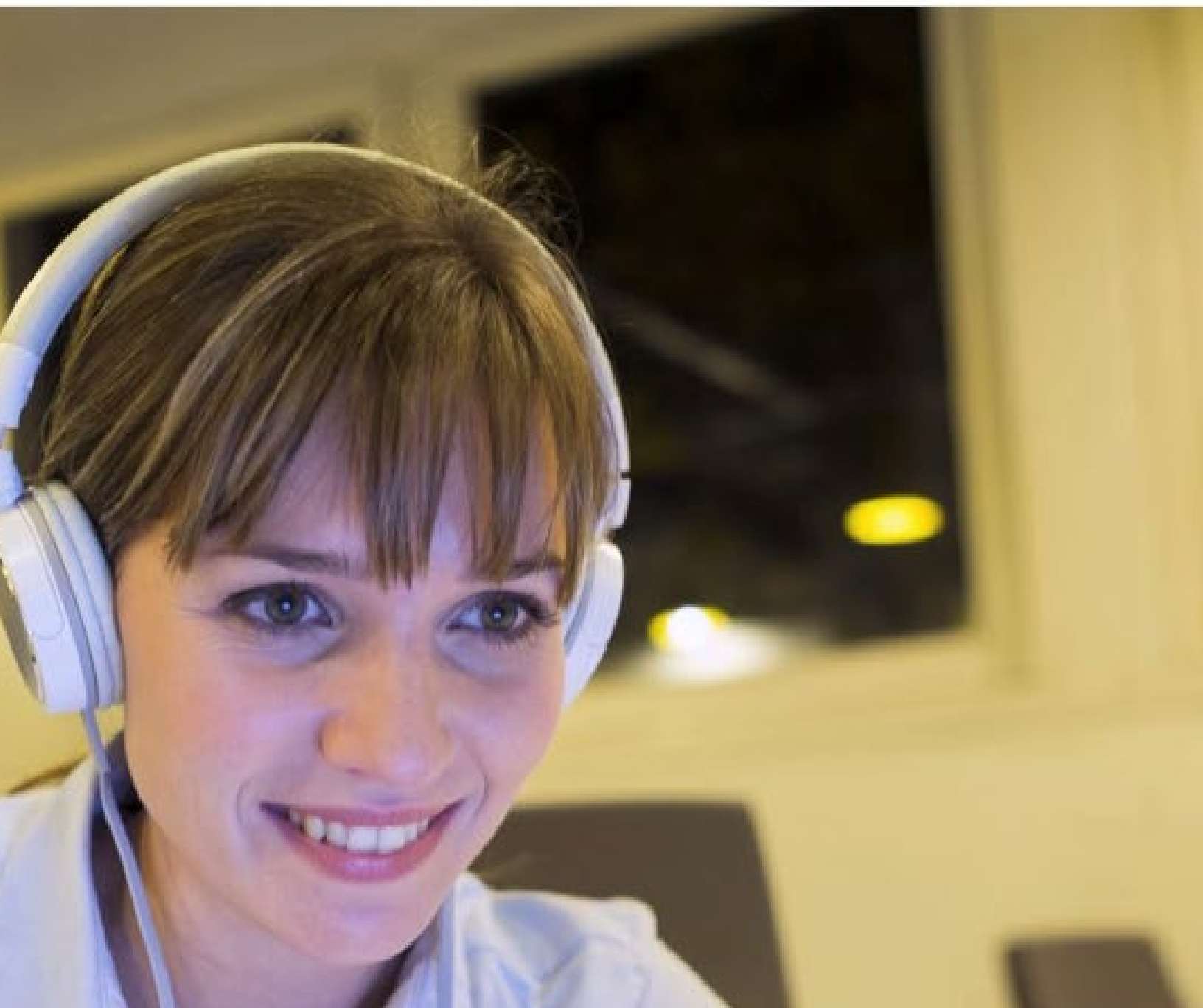Typical task where music can boost my work efficiency:

1)

2)

3)

Tasks where the "Work Efficiency" playlist did not work:

1)

2)

3)

The right music can increase work efficiency without disturbing your concentration.

You probably noticed the "Work Efficiency" playlist works best with routine tasks like data entries, checking your mail, light reading etc. – but not so much when you need to concentrate. In that case the choice of music needs special attention.

It is time to find music for a "Concentration" playlist.

STEP 1: BUILD A PLAYLIST FOR CONCENTRATION

Here are the rules:

RULE #1

Choose music you like

This should be a no-brainer by now…

RULE #2

Avoid as many disturbance factors as possible

1)   Choose instrumental songs over songs with vocals

2)   Avoid clear melody-bearing instruments. (Especially those resembling a voice).

3)   Avoid songs with other attention-grabbing sounds

4)   Choose predictable songs with a simple rhythm

DISTURBANCE FACTORS

You need to avoid certain things in a playlist for concentration:

SILENCE

Sudden silence (e.g. a break) makes your brain think Danger!
Prolonged silence is also bad, because you need a little noise to
concentrate.

VOICE

When other people talk or sing you listen, especially if it is in a language
you understand.

MELODY-BEARING INSTRUMENTS

We pay attention to clear melodies in music. Instruments resembling the
human voice are worse.

ATTENTION-GRABBERS

Music can contain elements grabbing your attention – on purpose or
unintentionally.

UNPREDICTABLE MUSIC

When the rhythm is unsteady, or the song is challenging your brain's ability
to predict what comes next.

LOUDNESS

When the music contains too much information – or you have simply turned
up the volume too loud.

RULE #3

Choose songs you already know

Unknown music draws attention. Music you have grown tired of will irritate you - and draws attention. Both scenarios will spoil your concentration.

TIP! It is a more specialized task finding music for the "Concentration" playlist. I recommend watching the short video: "Tips for finding music for a concentration playlist", before going any further.

Now create your first "Concentration" playlist with a minimum of five to six songs.

STEP 2: FINISH YOUR "PICK-ME-UP" PLAYLIST

During last week's exercises you might have filled up your "Pick-me-up" playlist.

If not - find the three to five songs that give you shivers, goosebumps, a lump in the throat or otherwise move you and put them on the "Pick-me-up" playlist.

...Because now it is time to kickstart your brain!

STEP 3: USE MUSIC FOR CONCENTRATION

• Choose a work task to test the playlist.
• Play the "Pick-me-up" playlist ten minutes before. Do nothing else.
• Then start the "Concentration" playlist and begin working. Be careful the music is not too loud.
• Write down your experience below.

How well did the playlists help you concentrate? (1-10):

What do you need to change to make the playlist work better?

"Concentration" playlist:

"Pick-me-up" playlist:

ATTENTION! I recommend using the "Pick-me-up" playlist to prepare your brain. But there is not always time. Sometimes it is not even needed. Then it is ok to "just" use the "Concentration" playlist.

Also remember that sometimes silence IS the best option.

MUSIC AND STRESS

Module 4

MUSIC AND STRESS

Implement music to prevent and treat stress

There is scientific proof that the right music can lower stress.

The are generally two mechanisms at play:
- Music increases dopamine levels and decreases cortisol (stress hormone)
- Music interacts with the oldest unconscious parts of your brain controlling breathing, heart rate and blood pressure.

This way music can help treat symptoms of stress, help you reach the surface again or help you do something about whatever stresses you out.

You do not need to invest in special new age anti-stress meditation music with zitars, gong-gongs and *Jai Guru Deva Om*-chants. It works much better with music you select yourself.

It is now time to construct your own "Anti-Stress" playlist.

STEP 1: CONSTRUCT AN "ANTI-STRESS" PLAYLIST

Here is the simple recipe to selecting music for your own "Anti-Stress" playlist:

1) Choose music you like
2) Lower the tempo – optimally 60-80 BPM
3) Use predictable music
4) Avoid disturbance factors

The playlist should be at least 25 minutes long. You need a minimum of five to six tracks, and I recommend choosing longer tracks (preferably five to eight minutes long).

TIP! Watch the ultra-short video on how to easily find music for your Anti-Stress playlist.

STEP 2: HOW TO USE THE "ANTI-STRESS" PLAYLIST

1) Dedicate time without the possibility of being disturbed
2) Start with the "Pick-me-up" playlist for ten minutes.
3) Then listen to the "Anti-Stress" playlist for a minimum of 20-25 minutes. Do nothing else.

Think of it as a way of meditating to prevent or treat a serious disease.

When you have tried it a couple of times evaluate the playlist below.

How well did the playlist help you (1-10)? (10 being the higher score):

What do you need to change to make the playlist work better?

" *Music can treat symptoms of stress to help you reach the surface again and to do something about what stresses you out.*

MODULE 5

LET THE MUSIC PLAY

Module 5

LET THE MUSIC PLAY

How to apply what you have learned

I hope Modules 1 to 4 gave you an overview of how sound affects you while working.

Now let us see how you can keep on moving in the direction of killing noise in the office and using music to create a better working day.

It is time for a follow-up on what you have learned so far and tying up all the loose ends.

You took a first step in Module 1 to get rid of the noise. Most likely your colleagues and the management need to be involved in further change to get rid of the noise.

YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE - BOILED DOWN

- You react to sound today like a caveman
- Noise is bad for efficiency, concentration and causes stress and increased sick-leave
- We react individually to noise (e.g. introvert/extrovert)
- Music implemented right can increase efficiency and concentration
- Music can be used to decrease stress
- How music works depends on who we are.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Share your knowledge
- Share your experiences – let your colleagues try what you did
- Be open and drive the change. Knowledge commits!

What are the next three active steps to get rid of the noise in the office and agree on a common sound and music policy? Write it down below.

Action step 1:

Action step 2:

Action step 3:

> *Music can help to make you work more efficiently and to concentrate better.*
> *Dedicate time to prepare and update your playlists.*

FINISHING THE PLAYLISTS

In Modules 2 to 4 you learned about the positive effects of music and built your first playlists. Now it is time to finish and work them into your daily routine.

The Work Efficiency playlist – music for routine tasks

The Concentration playlist – music for cognitively demanding tasks

The Anti-stress playlist – music to prevent and treat stress

The Pick-me-up playlist – music to give an initial dopamine boost

STEP 1: MAKE CORRECTIONS

Go through Modules 2 to 4 to see suggestions to change you need to implement, in order to make the playlists work more efficiently. Write it down below.

CORRECTIONS TO PLAYLISTS:

The "Work Efficiency" playlist

The "Concentration" playlist

CORRECTIONS TO PLAYLISTS:

The "Anti-Stress" playlist

The "Pick-me-up" playlist

STEP 2: MAKE THE PLAYLISTS LONGER

Working for 25 minutes at a time per task, followed by a break is recommended for a more effective day of work. The playlists you constructed fit this. But they should contain at least twice the amount of songs.

So take some time to make your playlists longer.

TIP! See the video on how to use Spotify-features to easily find more music for the lists.

FACTS FROM THE REAL WORLD

Classical music helped the police fight crime in the London Underground.

The classical music helped the rates of robbery to drop by 35%, violence against staff by 25% and vandalism by 37%.

STEP 3: ALTERNATIVE PLAYLISTS

Sometimes you need more or different playlists for certain types of tasks or to obtain a specific effect. Write down suggestions below.

Work Efficiency playlists

Concentration playlists

Anti-Stress playlists

Pick-me-up playlists

Tip! If you have discovered that music does not have an optimal effect on you, playlists with sounds from nature might work – especially for your "Concentration" and "Anti-Stress" playlists.

STEP 4: ORGANIZE YOUR PLAYLISTS

Do not waste working hours finding your playlists. Your playlists should be easy to access and to recognize. It is very simple:

- Create a playlist folder in Spotify
- Place it on top
- Create subfolders (pick-me-up, work efficiency, concentration, anti-stress)
- Drag and drop playlists to subfolders
- Give your playlists easy, recognizable names

TIP! See how to organize your playlists in the video.

YOU MADE IT!

Congratulations!

You have made it through the course. I hope to have given you knowledge, inspiration and hopefully also some tools you can use now and in the future.

In 2018, Harvard University published a study. It showed that we tend to isolate and interact less in open office environments. But now you know a trick or two, to counteract this tendency.

Start singing together with your colleagues every morning and get a brain boost of the trust hormone oxytocin and dopamine to get a head-start.

Just like the 7 little dwarfs did….

Want to know more?

There is a lot of scientific literature behind this course. And yes – most of it is pretty dry…

But if you want to learn more about how music affects us then consult the list below for a good place to start.

4 BOOKS I RECOMMEND ON THE EFFECT OF MUSIC:

- A. North & D. Hargreaves: "The Social and Applied Psychology of Music"

- Diana Deutsch: "The Psychology of Music"

- Daniel J. Levitin: "This Is Your Brain On Music"

- Stefan Koelsch: "Brain and Music"

If you have questions feel free to email me at info@mindmovingmusic.dk.

Kind regards,
Simon Kirk Nissen
MindMovingMusic

LEARN MORE

Do you want to learn more about the effects of music?

Feel free to visit my blog (in Danish).

Read more:

www.mindmovingmusik.dk/blog