

# Why idle moments are crucial for creativity

Our brains are at their most innovative when they are resting, so why aren't we making time for quiet reflection?



By Elle Metz

Last month, both the US Department of Homeland Security and the UK Department of Transport issued a new ban. Passengers flying from certain areas of North Africa and the Middle East can no longer carry electronics larger than a smartphone on flights.

Royal Jordanian airlines cheekily responded by offering travellers "12 things to do on a 12-hour flight with no tablet or laptop." Number 11 was "analyse the meaning of life."

There's nothing inherently funny about this suggestion. It's amusing because the thought of quiet contemplation on a long flight rather than being entertained via a screen is, in today's world, ridiculous.

Humans have daydreamed for thousands of years, and yet, these days, spare moments are filled with using our smartphones and other devices—scrolling through social media, listening to podcasts, responding to emails—leaving us little time to let our minds wander. This may seem a small change, but its effect, on the way our minds work and on our collective creativity, could be far-reaching. In fact, it could be hindering your ability to come up with fresh, innovative ideas.

