

## **The Link Between Coffee and Creativity**

<http://www.thekitchn.com/the-link-between-coffee-and-creativity-225036>

Coffee is a part of regular routines for many creatives — writers in particular. Coffee shops are also preferred work spaces, as the ambient noise found in coffee shops has been shown to be conducive to creative cognition.



A cup of coffee can feel like the kickstart to a creative process, and help get us into a creative flow. But how are coffee and creativity really linked?

### **How Coffee Affects the Brain**

When we drink coffee, the caffeine goes to your brain, and when your brain is active, the firing neurons produce a byproduct called adenosine. When adenosine levels get high, that's your brain's cue that it's time to take a break, at which point you become drowsy.

Caffeine actually blocks the adenosine receptors, which keeps you feeling alert and on top of your game, even when your brain would usually be trying to slow down a bit. Because of this, coffee not only increases our energy and keeps us from being sleepy, but it helps our concentration. That's why when we drink a cup of coffee before working, we feel like we can focus and get things done.

### **Coffee and Creativity**

As Maria Konnikova wrote in a New Yorker article looking at the science behind coffee and creativity, "Creative insights and imaginative solutions often occur when we stop working on a particular problem and let our mind move on to something unrelated."

Since coffee keeps us focused, that means our caffeinated minds don't have the chance to wander.

However, look at the laundry list of creative individuals that have incorporated a serious coffee ritual into their everyday routine, and it would seem that somehow, while coffee might not help with mind-wandering, it does on some level play a role in the creative process.

### **Coffee and Writing**

To be creative, we need to let our minds wander, but when we have done that and have ideas we need to execute, coffee can play an essential role in helping us focus those ideas and put them into action.

Maybe that's why coffee has always been such a beloved drink of writers; we love to let our minds wander, but at some point, we must put pen to paper (or fingers to a keyboard, as the case may be) — and when we do, we want to focus on the task in front of us, so we reach for the coffee cup.

### **Coffee and Alcohol**

This is also a good explanation for why many people advocate for the creative combination of alcohol and coffee. A glass of wine or a bottle of beer relaxes you, and makes you less concentrated on your surroundings; your mind feels free to wander. Once those new ideas have come to you and you want to do something with them, another glass of wine or beer isn't going to do the trick — but coffee will. In other words: Alcohol helps fuel the ideas, and coffee helps do something with them.

### **The Ritual of Coffee**

When we look at coffee and creativity, it's important to remember that coffee is more than just a drink; for many of us, it's a ritual, and ritual can be an essential part of encouraging creativity. So while the effects of caffeine might not assist in allowing your mind to wander, having a set ritual every day (let's say, in this case, coffee and writing) can also be an essential part of a creative practice.

Want to help fuel your creativity? Go on a walk, do something spontaneous, set aside time to do something new, get off your smartphone, use your imagination, read, or talk to someone about a subject you know nothing about.

Then once those juices are flowing and you're ready to do something with them, pour yourself a cup of coffee and get started. Who knows what you'll end up creating.