



# Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

## Enjoy the Silence

Hi everyone, and thank you for reading my column. I hope it has been helping you improve and understand your game. If you have any questions that you would like to have answered, please go to my website [www.allisonfisher.com](http://www.allisonfisher.com).

*When you play your big matches you have total silence, which must help with concentration. When I play in tournaments it is noisy, which is very frustrating. I win some tournaments but should be doing better than I am. I've been playing about 10 years, and I'm not a bad player, but something is stopping me from going to the next level.*

When I think back to the time I started playing in a social club in England at the age of 12, it was noisy all around me. There were people laughing, talking, machines going, and kids running around. I really believe that those times helped

more relaxed and inviting. It also allows the players to concentrate on playing pool. I actually like it and think it is hard for an audience to sit there very quietly and not move or talk throughout the day.

Then all of a sudden we get down to the televised part of the event on the final day. Of course now we lose the music, as there can be no background noise. It is so different than the last few days. Now it is just you, your opponent, and the cameramen in the arena.

I fortunately have learned to play both ways, and they are very different. But the whole point is that when you are focused you don't notice anything going on around you. You don't notice the audience, the cameraman, even the noise or lack of it!

When you are not focused on the game, you notice everything, and it bothers you. What you really need to work on is a way to block out any outside interference and focus only on you. Some players do this by having a good routine that

keeps them occupied, and some go through affirmations so that no negative thoughts get inside their minds. I personally, along with other snooker players, have worked on creating a strong routine from the moment I step up to the table throughout the whole delivery of the stroke and the finish.

I keep mentioning this in my articles for many different questions because it always comes back down to the fundamentals. They are the foundation for a solid game. If you have a good routine, then your confidence grows along with your focus. Good luck. ♦

*Considered by many to be the leading lady in women's pool today, Allison Fisher started her illustrious pool career by winning the World Snooker Championship at the age of 17. She continued playing snooker and living in England for the next ten years, accumulating a stunning array of titles. In 1995, Allison relocated to the U.S., where her domination continues on the women's pro tour. She currently resides in Charlotte, NC, and has recently become a BCA-certified instructor. Her countless collection of awards, titles, and championships have made Allison one of the most popular and well-respected players in the game today.*

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me learn to block out any outside interference. I was solely focused on what I was doing. As there was only one snooker table, we used to just play doubles matches. Therefore, if it was your shot, you had to make it count in order to stay at the table longer.

Then I entered in to the snooker arena in national competition. It was deathly quiet. In the audience you were almost scared to make a noise. Inside the arena, even though you could concentrate, it could be intimidating because you then realize that all eyes are focused on you.

In 1997 I arrived in the United States, and to my surprise there was music playing in the background in the tournament arena. I had never heard this before. The reason for this is to drown out conversation and distractions in the audience. It is not played too loud, but it makes the whole atmosphere