



The Silmu is designed to be a space for relaxing and recovering from stress | Photo source [Pexels](#)

[Innovation](#) > [Architecture & Design](#) > [An experiential space to relax and recharge](#)

## AN EXPERIENTIAL SPACE TO RELAX AND RECHARGE

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

### New relaxation pods for workplaces and public spaces are designed for stress-busting micro-breaks

**Spotted:** Workers' daily stress levels reached a record high in 2020 according to a [global survey](#) by Gallup, with 43 per cent of respondents in over 100 countries claiming to have experienced stress. With such striking figures, it's little wonder that the World Health Organization has called stress the 'health epidemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. Against this context, designers are beginning to think about how the built environment can reduce stress levels – particularly in the workplace.

Designed by Finnish designer Pekka Kumpula, Silmu is an experiential space for focus and relaxation. The single-person pods are designed to be installed in places that lack privacy – such as workplaces and public spaces. Combining a natural design language with state-of-the-art technology, the idea is that Silmu can act as the perfect setting, either for a 'micro-break' during the most hectic periods of the day, or for highly concentrated work that requires maximum focus.

The pods integrate music composed by film and TV composer Mars Lasar – which is played through built-in, noise-cancelling speakers. To further deepen the experience, 'feel-the-sound' technology lets users feel the music all over their body. A fan and air filtration system keeps the pods fresh, and LED lights can be adjusted for colour and brightness. Users can tweak the environment within the space using an interior control panel or through a mobile app. The seat within the pod is ergonomically designed for maximum comfort.

"The design language of Silmu comes from the nature of the Nordic, from the first shoots of spring," explains Kumpula. "Like when nature wakes up, Silmu also helps you to re-create yourself, relax and refresh," he adds.

Other stress-busting innovations spotted by Springwise include smart devices that re-create forest bathing, a vibroacoustic bed that could aid physical and mental health, and lighting panels that boost mood when working from home.

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1st April 2022

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### **Takeaway:**

Stress takes its toll – on individuals and on society. Health-wise stress contributes to problems such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, arthritis, depression, and anxiety. Economically, a [study](#) found that stress costs the US economy \$300 billion (around €271 billion) per year. Against this context many companies are investing to de-stress their workers, with the global workplace wellness market expected to reach [\\$66.2 billion](#) (around €60 billion) by 2027. Silmu is just the latest example of an innovation that aims to improve our peace of mind in the midst of our hectic modern lives.