

Improving Concentration



It's okay. Everyone checks out at some point. Our minds wander, and we don't always pay attention. Everyone has walked into a room and forgotten why they went there in the first place.

But when this happens during a test or study session... it kind of bites.

Look at the following tips to ensure your mind doesn't take a vacation when you need it working.

Reduce Interference

- Where you study often determines whether you study
- What are the people around you doing? Are there people around you?
- The goal is to find a quiet place as distraction-free as possible
- And where is your phone? What are you doing with it?
- Two hours of studying with your phone to distract you could be completed in one hour without your phone
- Doing one activity at a time improves concentration, improves productivity, and increases your ability to recall that information when you need it

Think out loud

- If you feel yourself wandering, speak your actions out loud
- This forces you to wake up and pay attention
- Been staring at your notes for 5 minutes?
- Tell yourself you are reading, or writing, or organizing them

Use Your Body

- While our minds wander easily, our bodies... not so much
- To refocus your attention, bring your mind back

- Focus on the feel of the chair you're sitting on, the pen in your hand, the snuggly warmth of your fluffy sweater or your breathing
- Attention is also increased by the position in which we study
- Sit straight, leaning over your work
- Or stand. It is harder to lose focus and get sleepy that way
- Or walk. Again, movement helps with keeping focused and awake

Deal with Distraction

- Life is busy... both personal and academic
- Can't study because you have all these other things to do?
- Get them out of the way first. Make that dentist appointment. Schedule an oil change. Buy those snazzy pair of pants.
- If this isn't possible, make a list of all the personal tasks you need to complete
- Once they're out of the way on paper, then you can focus on schoolwork

Cuseo, Joseph B, Aaron Thompson, Michele Campagna, Viki Sox Fecas. *Thriving in College and Beyond: Research-Based Strategies for Academic Success and Personal Development*. Dubuque: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2016.

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