

Concentration

The first step is to figure out what impacts on your concentration.

Do any of the statements below apply to you?

- I am easily distracted when I study.
- My mind wanders when I read.
- I can't seem to find the time to study.
- I tend to procrastinate and put off studying to do something else.
- My mind goes blank on a test.
- If I do not like the topic, I lose interest and do not pay attention.
- If the subject does not relate to my career goals, I lose interest.
- If an assignment is too difficult, I usually do not stick with it.
- I do not have a career goal, or a reason to study.
- It's hard for me to take notes and listen at the same time.

Some other factors that can impact concentration are:

- Physical distractions – Noise, Phone, TV
- Social distractions – family, friends, Messenger or Whatsapp notifications
- Lack of study goals
- Being preoccupied with thoughts
- Lack of materials/resources

Strategies for Improving Concentration

Remember: Concentration strategies will require practice before they become habitual. Considerable change will likely occur within 4-6 weeks of practice.

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find a comfortable and ventilated study environment - Find a place that you use exclusively for study so that the environment becomes associated with concentration - Make sure you have everything you need to study
Be Comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure you have adequate light - Sit up straight to aid concentration - Avoid studying in bed, so it is associated with sleep
Reduce Distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take the phone off the hook (or aeroplane mode) turn off the TV, etc. -Clear away clutter and distractions -Try not to get annoyed with distractions, that will make them more influential
“Park” Your Worries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a “concern” notebook and every time your mind wanders to a worry, record your thoughts -Notice themes and take action to address your concerns
Schedule “Worry” Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set aside a specific time each day to think about concerns
Schedule Your Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estimate the number of hours you will need to study for each course each week; identify other fixed obligations - Create a schedule with adequate study time
Goal Setting	<p>Write up a list of tasks and their deadline for each subject</p> <p>Goals should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meaningful & Desired - Realistic & Achievable - Specific & Defined - Stated in the Positive - Internalized - In Writing - Measurable - Prioritized

Think Small	- Break study goals into small achievable tasks
Honour Your Body	- Eat healthy, get enough sleep and exercise frequently - Attend to any medical or health concerns - Allow for love, laughter, leisure and personal interest time
Take Breaks	- Take short breaks; concentration time is approx 20 -50min - Take a walk, oxygenate your brain which helps alertness
Change is Good	- Every couple hours change the subject you're working on - You pay more attention when your mind is challenged with new information
Reward Yourself	-Give yourself a reward when you have completed a task -Keep the task small and reward meaningful -For major assignments choose special incentive rewards
Active Study Methods	- Ask yourself questions, dialogue with your material, quiz yourself, summarize, take sides of an argument, critique
Chart Energy Levels	- Note when you study best and schedule your more demanding or less interesting material for these times

Write down your top 3 obstacles that impact on your concentration, come up with a solution for each. Try out 1 or 2 of your solutions this week.

- | | Obstacle | Solution |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |