



- readings
- * try to anticipate what direction the professor might go in
- * ask questions related to the material being presented, out loud or in your mind.

Controlling Distractions

- Work within your personal limits of staying focused, and gradually expand the limit. "The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step" (Lao Tzu).
- When worrying thoughts come into your mind during class or while studying, record them on your "distraction pad":
- jot thoughts on a slip of paper and put it in your pocket, to be dealt with later. Say to yourself "I'll get back to you later" and return to your target activity.
- if the thoughts aren't important, just let them pass through your mind.
- at a designated time of day when you have 15-30 minutes of uninterrupted time, look over your day's concerns and decide if there is anything you need or want to deal with. Is the worry still relevant? Are there patterns to your worrying thoughts? Anything you need to settle? If so, talk to someone or solve the issue. You may have really great thoughts about another paper you are writing, that just came to you at the wrong time.

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- 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
- Make sure you have adequate light
- Sit up straight to aid concentration
- Avoid studying in bed, so it is associated with sleep
- Take the phone off the hook, turn off the TV, etc.
- Clear away clutter and distractions
- Schedule Your Time- 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- Goals should be:
 - * 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
- Allow for love, laughter, leisure and personal interest time
- Take Breaks- Take short breaks; concentration time is approx 30-90min
- 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
- Chart Energy Levels- Note when you study best and schedule your more demanding or less interesting material for these times.

With practice, these techniques may be effectively implemented during a class, study period or exam.

This information has been taken from: <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/slc/strategies/learning-studying/concentration-strategies>



A Guide to Focus and Concentration



Focus and Concentration

Tips to improve focus and concentration

Your Health Habits

- Eat regularly to maintain adequate levels of glucose in your brain
- Sleep enough to maintain regular body rhythms and enable you to feel rested and alert
- Exercise to reduce restlessness, manage stress and feel good. Getting fresh air before class or a study period will help wake you up and increase your level of alertness.

Motivation

- Connect your present activity to your short-term and long-term goals. "Keep your eye on the prize".
- Set a specific target in terms of time spent on the current activity, or amount of work to be completed
- Do your work before your play. Build in a reward for successfully reaching your goal: a coffee, chat, walk, or something you enjoy that you must earn.

Study Habits

- Develop a routine place, time, and pattern to your study sessions
- Blocks of study time (2+ hours each) divided into 30-50 minute periods with a short break (5-10 minutes) are effective.
- Try varying the subjects you are studying or activities required in each long study session.
- Break up large projects into manageable sections. Congratulate yourself for completing individual sections.
- Whenever possible schedule your most challenging work during your personal best learning time. "Do the hard stuff first, and the easy stuff will take care of itself".

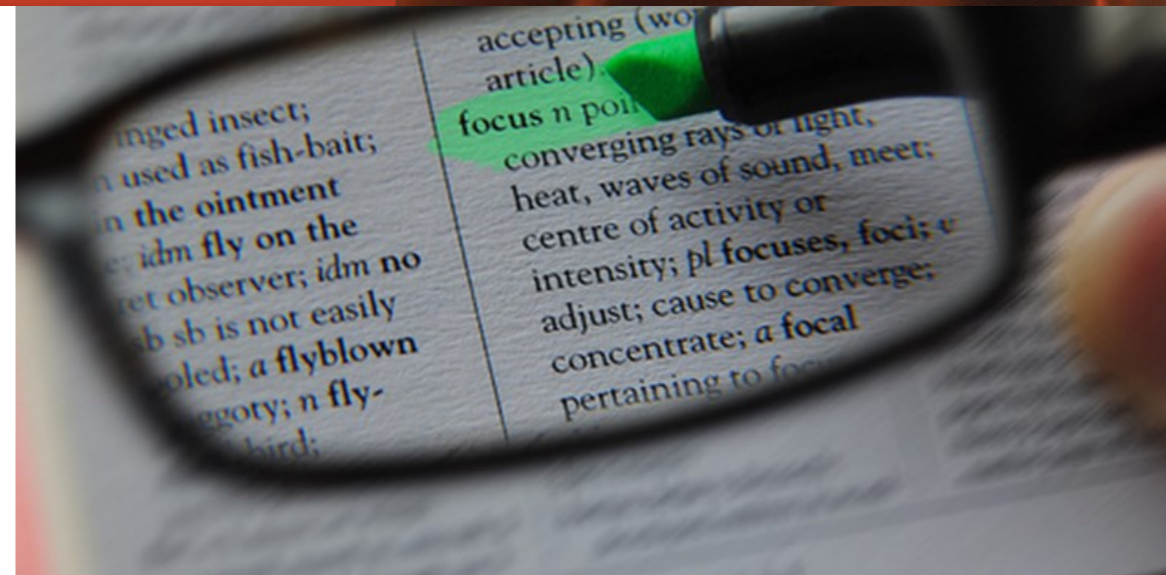
Getting Started

- Keep all necessary supplies close at hand to avoid endless set-up time and distractions.
- Try the "5 More Rule". Commit to working solidly for 5 (minutes, pages, sentences...) and then Do It...and then intentionally decide to work another "5 More" or not.

- Start each work session with 10 minutes of review of the most recent material. This reinforces previous learning and boosts your confidence

Concentrating in Lessons

- Reduce distractions: Get to class in time to pick your best seat...close to front, off to one side or near to/far from a window... whatever works
- Stay awake: Take notes during the lesson, or add to notes from the web or manual
- Use a code in your notes to mark things you don't understand (eg. use a ? or highlight text in red), or mark things the teacher said were really important (eg. with an **, or highlight text in green)
- If the teacher is a double class, try to get some fresh air on the break
- Engage your mind. Actively participate in class and use your brain more actively:
 - * offer your opinion
 - * think about how the material relates to what was recently covered in class or



Focus and Concentration Questionnaire

Self – Assessment Exercise:

Select the statements that 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 instructor, 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. Others:
- 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 instructor, 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



Possible causes for poor concentration: (Check the statements that apply to you).

Internal Factors:

- ⇒ Physical distractions – Irregular eating, sleeping, and exercise patterns,
- ⇒ depression, anxiety, chronic pain or other related health and mental health issues.
- ⇒ Emotion preoccupation or distraction – Personal issues or crisis ie. relationship break-up, job loss
- ⇒ Excessive worry – Preoccupation and fear about future, failure, etc. Negative self-talk – Critical, comparative or perfectionist thinking Lack of career direction
- ⇒ Lack of clarity or confusion regarding course work or expectations Other.
- ⇒ Physical distractions – Irregular eating, sleeping, and exercise patterns.

External Factors:

- ⇒ People talking
- ⇒ Noise distractions – TV, people talking, music, telephone
- ⇒ Light too dim/bright
- ⇒ Temperature too high/low
- ⇒ Time pressures
- ⇒ Social distractions – invitations, family needs, time with friends
- ⇒ Discouraging words from others
- ⇒ Lack of adequate materials or resources to complete the task
- ⇒ Physical danger or threat
- ⇒ Other:

Spontaneously answer the following question: I am most focused and alert when I

EYE ON Senior Years Publications

Each student is strongly encouraged to use the Senior Years publication, Super Study Skills which is designed to assist them in their final years of study. This is filled with lots of handy hints on studying, creating effective notes, writing well, appropriate research and references and how to perfect your essays and reports.

Each week a newsletter article also goes out which helps to explain a range of policies, rules and expectations of students in the Senior Years. It is strongly advised that all parents and students read this to keep up to date with NTCET requirements.

WEBSITE Monthly Picks



A range of Senior Years skills

and advice for completing your senior years at school effectively will be published to the students in both hard copy and on the College website. Students and families are strongly encouraged to make the most of the support notes, essay guidelines, research advice and referencing systems as a way of advancing their learning.