

Concentration Tips

1. Check out your study environment.

Are there any distractions? Is it too hot/cold or too noisy? Is there adequate lighting? Is it comfortable, but not so comfortable that you fall asleep? Can you minimize or get rid of distractions? You can start by turning your cell phone off.

2. Consider your schedule.

Are you trying to do too much in a short amount of time? Break big tasks into smaller parts. Set realistic study goals. Study at the time of day when you are most alert.

3. Know what you want to accomplish.

Create questions about the subject content before you start studying; when you read, you will consciously be looking for the answers instead of feeling pressured to make sense of everything all at once.

4. Get the facts:

- Maximum concentration varies from 15-20-minute blocks.
- Your brain needs a break after 45-50 minutes to absorb, assimilate, and avoid overload.
- Reviewing lecture notes within 24 hours of learning will increase rate of remembering.

5. Are your thoughts wandering while you try to study?

Try to find out why. Get help if you need it. If your wandering thoughts are manageable, you may find the following techniques useful to keep you on track:

- As soon as your mind starts wandering, yell "STOP" loudly inside your head.
- Re-group your thoughts. Take control by sorting out what it is you want to accomplish for a particular class. Refer to your course outline to see which topics are set for each week. Then refer to your notes and see what you have. Create an outline for the class, and then try to fill in each section with what you have at hand, or find out where you can access the information that is missing.

6. Is it hard to follow a lecture?

Is the instructor talking too fast or too slow, or using words you don't understand? You can talk with your instructor or teaching assistant during office hours to find possible solutions such as notes on reserve in the library or online notes. Can you swap notes

with another student? Is recording lectures an option? Would sitting at the front of the classroom help? Take five minutes to prepare yourself before each class to help you remain calm.

7. **Check out your diet.**

Do you feel sleepy while you're trying to concentrate? Certain foods and alcohol can make you feel "sluggish." Try healthy options, and avoid excessive caffeine intake.

8. **Consider other reasons why you may not be able to concentrate.**

Are you thinking about other important life events? Are you dealing with any difficult issues? Consider going to see a doctor, counsellor, campus clergy or nurse.