

I Can't Concentrate!

Author: Kansas State University

Topic: General

I CAN'T CONCENTRATE!

Do you believe you can't study because you can't concentrate? Actually, concentration is a **SKILL** you can learn! Learning a new skill works better with practice, so plan to practice the steps below. You'll see a difference within a very short time, and soon you'll concentrate anytime and anyplace.

1. **Teach your mind not to wander.** This is the easiest and most effective thing. When you lose concentration, remind yourself: "BE HERE NOW." Focus back on your task. You'll probably have to do this over and over in the beginning...that's OK. Just "BE HERE NOW." Practice ignoring. Don't look for who just dropped lots of books, or at the wiggling person next to you. Make a Mind Tunnel between you and the task or the person you are supposed to be listening to. Paying attention is a decision!
2. **Plan your worry time.** Sounds odd but works great! Schedule time during each day when you can think, worry, make lists, and focus on thoughts and concerns. If you slip into worrying or planning when you are supposed to be concentrating, put it on your Worry List; then keep that appointment with yourself. Return to your task and "BE HERE NOW."
3. **Get some air.** Breathe deeply from your abdomen, get up and move around, change your position intermittently. Keep your brain and body oxygenated!
4. **Change the topic.** Switch tasks every hour or so to keep your alertness fresh.
5. **Keep your mind active.** Actually consider what you are reading, ask yourself questions about it, anticipate what your teacher will think is important about the information. Take notes.
6. **Unfreeze your body.** Sit in an upright but relaxed position. Check your muscles and body parts-including fingers and toes-and make sure they're not clenched.
7. **Reward yourself.** Finished studying a chapter? Call a friend. Finished a written assignment? Read a chapter in a novel. Finished a term paper? Go out to dinner. You choose what works for you.

AND SOME MORE

- PLAN TO STUDY
- USE GOOD LIGHTING
- SIT IN A COMFORTABLE CHAIR
- TURN OFF THE TV AND THE PHONE
- MUSIC? ONLY IF IT WORKS FOR YOU
- HAVE A SNACK
- BELIEVE YOU CAN DO IT
- GET ENOUGH SLEEP
- REMEMBER THE REWARD
- WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHES
- DO THE HARDEST WORK WHEN YOU'RE MOST ENERGETIC
- HANG "DO NOT DISTURB" SIGNS