

# The Secret to Strengthening Your Concentration

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If you're having trouble concentrating, you have plenty of company. More than 70% of office workers report that they're frequently interrupted, and most of them say that those disruptions stop them from feeling like they've had a successful day, according to Forbes Magazine.

Chatty colleagues and pop up ads are unlikely to go away, but you can increase your focus. **Strengthening your concentration requires training your mind much like you train your body.**

Enrich your personal and professional life by making it easier to absorb and retain information. Find out more about mental habits and lifestyle changes that will help you stay on task.

## Changing Your Mental Habits:

1. **Meditate daily.** Mindfulness meditation is one of the most effective ways to become more focused as you teach yourself to direct your attention to observing your thoughts or another object. Each time your mind strays, you bring your attention back.
2. **Limit distractions.** Some studies suggest that it takes almost half an hour for your brain to recover from an interruption. Try to minimize such events by turning off your phone and letting others know the hours when you need privacy.
3. **Avoid multitasking.** Doing one thing at a time is becoming popular again. That's

because **multitasking causes stress, impairs memory, and interferes with the quality of your work.**

4. **Engage fully.** It's easier to pay attention when you're enthusiastic about a project. Whatever you're doing, strive to be fully present and commit yourself to making a contribution that you can be proud of.
5. **Find meaning.** If your mind wanders during tedious tasks, think about your purpose. Regard housework as a way to keep your family safe and comfortable. While you're filing, picture the clients who benefit from your work.
6. **Play games.** You can even have fun while you're giving your mind a workout. There's evidence that video games and word puzzles build concentration and other mental skills.
7. **Keep practicing.** Acquiring new habits and skills is a gradual process. Be patient with yourself and evaluate your progress to see which methods work well for you.

#### **Other Tips:**

1. **Prioritize sleep.** **Fatigue can affect your body the same way that alcohol does.**  
If you want to be able to focus, you'll need to sleep for 7 to 8 hours each night. Sticking to a regular schedule and blocking out background noise will help.
2. **Exercise regularly.** Working out helps your physical and mental health because it sends more blood and oxygen to your brain. Visit the gym or go for a walk.
3. **Drink water.** If you suddenly feel weak and scattered, you may be dehydrated. Drink water throughout the day. Remember that your sense of thirst declines

as you age.

4. **Take breaks.** Your brain needs downtime. **Schedule a quick break at least once an hour to move around and clear your thoughts.**

5. **Banish clutter.** Your environment affects your mental state and ability to perform. Throw away things you rarely use or donate them to charity. Clear off work surfaces and put items back in their place after using them.

6. **Appreciate nature. Green spaces boost your concentration.** Spend time outdoors each day. Drink your morning coffee in your backyard or stroll around the neighborhood after dinner.

7. **See your doctor.** About 5% of adults have an attention deficit disorder. Many other medical conditions and medications can make it difficult to focus too. Talk with your doctor about your individual concerns and what you can do to resolve them.

**You can increase your attention span by making simple changes in your daily habits.** As you sharpen your focus, you'll enjoy greater productivity and peace of mind.