



Dealing with Distraction

If you have a lot to do, it's natural to feel overwhelmed which contributes to procrastination. Here are some tips to help improve your focus.

- Take a 10-minute break every hour – jot down the time you have to return to the task.
- Use more than one sense – read aloud for a while.
- If you are working while listening to music with lyrics, switch to an instrumental.
- Take a break from something that requires a lot of concentration by doing a short burst of something mindless (folding laundry, etc.). Save Facebook and Youtube to use as a reward for completing a chunk of work, not for short breaks.
- Close your eyes for a few minutes and visualize yourself completing the task, handing in the paper, reaching a goal.
- Get up, stretch, walk briskly, dance.
- Have a snack with carbs, fat, and protein (like an apple and cheese), drink water. Skip the caffeine.
- While sitting at your desk, use a piece of paper and two pens. Draw a circle with one hand, and at the same time, draw two squares with the other hand while tracing a circle on the floor with one foot.
- Limit multitasking to non-academic tasks that don't require a lot of effort.
- Do not attempt course work when email and phone /texting are nearby and “open,” distracting you with signals and messages. When you stop to answer an email or text, it takes an average of 15 minutes to return to the task and 10 more minutes to get back to the same concentration level you had before the interruption.
- If you are distracted by your own tense, angry, or sad thoughts, don't keep trying to push them away. Stop what you're doing for a minute, grab a piece of paper, and jot down exactly what you're thinking about. Then set it aside and return to the task. Attending, even for a minute or two, will satisfy the need to think about this for now.