

Top Ten Tips for Increasing Concentration

1. Start assignments with some curiosity about the material and a positive attitude toward learning.
2. Designate a place where you go only to study. Use proper lighting.
3. Identify your distractions. Find ways to decrease them or to postpone them until study breaks (e.g., taking the phone off the hook, turning off instant messenger).
4. Decrease noises around you while studying. If you need some background music it should be soft. Keep the TV off.
5. Use "active study" techniques: sit straight in a chair at a desk, start out with questions about the material, outline chapters, underline key phrases after reading a section, write notes in margins, ask yourself what you have learned.
6. Divide your work into smaller manageable tasks that can be completed in a short period of time. Push yourself to complete one small task, then move on to the next task. Focus on one small task at a time.
7. Use times of peak alertness for studying difficult or less interesting topics. When you are tired or hungry concentration will be lowered.
8. When your mind starts to wander come up with some cue words to say to yourself (e.g., "Focus." "Get back on task.") to focus your concentration again.
9. Take breaks when you have completed tasks or when you feel concentration has decreased. Breaks should be approximately 10-15 minutes.
10. If you have other assignments or issues on your mind write them down on a "to do" list or take a small step to deal with them. Then get back to focusing on the task at hand.