

LEARNING TO CONCENTRATE

"I can't concentrate" is a common student complaint. Although the cure for this problem is not easy, the habit of concentration can be developed by self-discipline and practice in "becoming involved."

1. **Lack of interest in subject**
 1. Read actively, converse mentally with the author, question his viewpoint, anticipate his conclusions, attempt to disprove his ideas.
 2. Learn to use an effective method of study (SQ3R). Surveying and raising questions about the material arouse interest in what is to be read.
 3. Be alert to ways in which your course relates to your life and the current scene.

2. **Lack of background prevents understanding understanding**
 1. Explore the topic in an encyclopedia or a less complex book.
 2. Ask a friend who has the background to help you fill in the gaps.

3. **Lack of goals for each study session**
 1. Plan ahead exactly what you expect to accomplish in a study session. Don't allow yourself to quit without accomplishing this.
 2. Plan an enjoyable activity as a reward for a job well done.
 3. Make your objective to understand the assignment, not simply to cover pages.
 4. Set realistic goals. Take periodic breaks. Divide long assignments into shorter sessions.

4. **Poor reading and study skills**
 1. Ask your teacher for help.
 2. Learn an effective approach to textbook study.

5. **Trouble getting started**
 1. Have a definite place to study and be properly equipped with pencils, paper, dictionary, etc.
 2. Have a definite starting time that you enforce. The sooner you begin, the sooner you will be free to do other things.
 3. A brief review is helpful in getting started.

6. **General fatigue**
1. A balance of proper rest, good diet, and ample exercise will help you to study more effectively.
 2. Determine the time of day that is best for you and use this time for your most difficult assignments.
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7. **Sleepiness**
1. It helps to study in a well-ventilated room.
 2. Take a short break and do something active.
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8. **Daydreaming (an escape from work)**
1. Have only one course's material on your desk at a time.
 2. Keep a scratch pad on your desk. Jot down your irrelevant thoughts and come back to them later.
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8. **Worry about personal problems**
1. Go to the Counseling Office, or just talk to a good friend or understanding teacher.
 2. If you are having trouble deciding what to do after graduating, go to the Counseling Office. Counselors can evaluate your aptitudes and interests.
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10. **Worry about poor grades**
1. See your teacher and talk over low grades or unclear assignments. The sooner you do this, the better.
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11. **Worry about deadlines**
1. Keep a calendar of assignment deadlines and appointments.
 2. Make a schedule with definite time for studying and completing assignments. Stick to your schedule.
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12. **Noise**
1. Find a quiet place to study. Two hours of study in quiet surroundings does more good than five hours of study in a noisy place.
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From: University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, Reading & Study Skills Center.