

To get the most out of your classroom lectures and study time, you must be able to stay focused. Below you will find strategies for enhancing your ability to concentrate.

Focus Your Attention

1. *Vary your activities during study time*
 - a. Avoid working on only one type of activity during a long period of time. Over the course of a three-hour study block, you could read a section of your biology textbook, create an outline for an upcoming paper, and work on some math problems.
 - b. Changing from one skill or mental process makes concentration easier because it is refreshing and stimulating for the brain.
2. *Write and highlight as you read*
 - a. Taking notes and highlighting key terms and ideas forces a higher level of concentration and critical thinking as you read.
 - b. Writing and highlighting as you read encourages you to identify what is important, to see how ideas are related to one another, and to evaluate the information that is presented.
3. *Approach reading assignments critically*
 - a. To avoid getting bogged down memorizing nonessential details, look for the author's point of view, opinions, and evidence that support his or her main points.
 - b. Make connections with what you have already learned about the subject.
4. *Challenge yourself with deadlines*
 - a. Set reasonable deadlines to complete tasks. Deadlines will force you to stay focused.
 - b. Reward yourself when you meet a deadline.
5. *Eliminate as many classroom distractions as possible*
 - a. Sit in the front of the classroom
 - b. Either take your notes by hand or deactivate your Wi-Fi connection so that you are not tempted to surf the internet while you are in class.
 - c. Keep your cell phone turned off and in your backpack during class.

Monitor Your Level of Concentration

1. *Learn to read your symptoms of distractibility*
 - a. Try to determine why your concentration was broken. Was it an external distraction? Did something trigger your memory about something else?
2. *Look for patterns in loss of concentration*
 - a. What time of day are you most easily distracted?
 - b. Where are you studying when distractions occur?
 - c. What are you studying?
3. *Keep a list of distractions*
 - a. If your mind drifts to other projects, personal problems, and appointments while you are studying or in class, make a list of the things that pop into your mind and then return your focus to whatever you were doing before you became distracted.
 - b. Keep the list accessible but out of sight so that you can quickly locate it to write down the distraction but not have a constant visual.