

Concentration Tips

“I can’t concentrate” is a common student complaint. Although learning to focus your attention may not be a simple task, you’ll probably agree with most students that it’s a skill well worth developing. Quality study time leads to better grades and extra hours in the day.

Check over the causes of poor concentration listed below, then experiment with the active learning strategies suggested for each problem area.

If you:

Try to:

Lack interest in the subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Read actively. Converse mentally with your textbook authors; question their viewpoints, anticipate their conclusions, and attempt to disprove their ideas. x Learn to use an effective method of reading. Survey the material before you begin. Raise questions and then read for answers. Recite what you have learned. x Relate the course to your life, your goals, and your future.
Lack background knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Use inexpensive review books available at the store. x Check out a less complex book from the library. x Ask a friend or tutor who has the background to help fill in the gaps.
Lack goals for each study session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Plan ahead exactly what you expect to accomplish in a study session. x Keep working until you accomplish your goals. x Plan an enjoyable activity as a reward for a job well done.
Have trouble getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Choose one place to study. x Set a definite starting time. x Warm up to studying with a brief review.
Are generally fatigued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Make proper rest, good diet, and exercise part of your regular schedule so that you’ll have the energy to study efficiently. x Determine the time of day that is best for you and use that time for your most difficult assignments.
Worry about deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Keep a calendar of assignment deadlines and appointments. x Make a schedule of studying and completing assignments and then stick to it! x Set aside specific time to study every day and stay on top of your work.