

How to Find Your Focus While Working from Home



TIP SHEET



In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of people across the world are finding themselves working from home. While there are some conveniences, working from home isn't easy for everyone and can come with many distractions. For parents and caregivers, there is a whole new dimension of disruption and anxiety that comes with being able to get your work done while taking care of your family.

23 MINUTES

Studies show that if we are interrupted, it takes us an average of 23 minutes to return to our original task.

Here are a few quick ways to maintain focus while working from home:



Morning Magic: If you have a major task to complete, align your time to tackle it when your energy levels are at their peak and when you perform at your best. There is no exact time, but many people find that they're more alert, focused and productive in the morning. Prepare yourself to get started and set a realistic deadline, which can add a touch of positive stress to motivate you. Reward yourself when you reach mini goals and major milestones as you go. Breaking up big projects into smaller tasks will also help you from feeling overwhelmed.



Keep Hydrating: Did you know that 55-60% of your body and 73% of your brain is made up of water? Dehydration can affect brain function, mood and energy levels. Studies show that even small fluid fluctuations can have a detrimental effect on your ability to concentrate. Use a healthy habit tracker to keep hydrating throughout the day.



Move It: Make sure you get moving to help boost your performance and focus. By increasing blood flow to the brain, you'll feel more alert and boost your energy levels. Regular exercise also helps to regulate your mood through the release of serotonin. And moving sprinkles your brain with BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), a protein that acts like a fertilizer in parts of your brain associated with learning, memory and higher thinking. Turn on an exercise video or go for a (socially distant) walk outside.



Become a Taskmaster: The 'Ivy Lee' method has been around for 100 years – and there's a reason why this productivity and priority planner is still popular today – it's proven, and it works! At the end of each day, write down your six most important tasks for the next day and put them in order of importance. You've now closed your day and can rest your brain and body. When you start work the next day, focus on the first task and keep going until it's finished, and then move onto the second task. Try to stick to this and move any leftover items to your next day so you have a record. This helps you to stop thinking about them, which will help you to relax.



Turn it Up: Consider wearing your headphones to send a message: do not disturb. Even if you're not listening to anything. If you're keen to listen to some music, consider genres without lyrics. Studies show that music without lyrics tends to be less distracting.



Take a Break: Studies show that the longer you work on one particular task, the harder it becomes to maintain your focus, especially when you work past 90 minutes. You've probably felt your attention and ability to concentrate fade, and your mind start to wander. Unfortunately, our brains aren't always aware of declining efficiency. Small breaks throughout your working day can help your focus and concentration.



Close the Day: Put boundaries on your day so you can separate your work time from your leisure time at home. Physically, get up and move away from your workspace. Leave your computer and tools in another room if possible. And most importantly, resist the urge to do work tasks no matter how quick they might be. We don't know how long this will continue, so maintaining a health work-life balance will be important.

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