

8 Tips to Jumpstart Your Focus

Having a hard time staying focused or getting started on your coursework? Try one or more of these strategies to help you get focused and stay focused.

1. Eliminate Distractions

Put your phone on airplane mode or Do Not Disturb. You can also try placing it out of reach or in a different room. If you're reading or completing an assignment that does not require digital devices, try closing your laptop.

2. The Two Minute Rule

Set aside 2 minutes. If you see a task or action that can be done in 2 minutes or less, do it immediately. Completing the task right away takes less time than having to go back and do it later.

3. "Blast Off" Method

Conduct a 5-4-3-2-1 countdown and then launch yourself into the task you've been procrastinating on. This practice will help you override bad habits and put you in greater control of your actions.

4. Pomodoro Method

Balance dedicated periods of focus with deliberate breaks in between. Work for 25 minutes straight, then take a 5 minute break. Repeat 4 times, then take a longer break. This works particularly well if you're feeling restless.

5. Complete Recurring Tasks at the Same Time Each Day

Pick one or two daily tasks and set aside specific times for them. This helps you to avoid decision fatigue and develop consistent habits. A good task to do at the same time each day is checking your email or downloading readings from CourseWorks.

6. Give It 20 Minutes

Give yourself 20 minutes to work on a particular task, especially if it's something you are avoiding. Do nothing else for those 20 minutes. Set a timer-timing helps add a sense of urgency.

7. Plan Your Day the Night Before

Write down three things you want to accomplish the next day. This gives you a head start on the next day as you've already planned what needs to be done. Cap the list at 3 items- keep it short, simple, and realistic!

8. Make a Not-To-Do List

Create a list of all the activities you plan to stop doing in order to be less distracted. You can also list activities that you want to consciously deprioritize.