

Concentration Tips

Concentration & Memory

List three places where you usually study in the order you most use them.

A. _____ B. _____ C. _____

Now circle the column that applies to each of these places.

(T = True F = False)

	<u>Place A</u>		<u>Place B</u>		<u>Place C</u>	
1. Other people often interrupt me when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
2. Much of what I can see here reminds me of things that don't have anything to do with studying.	T	F	T	F	T	F
3. I can often hear radio or TV when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
4. I can often here the phone ringing when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
5. I think I take too many breaks when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
6. I seem to be especially bothered by distractions here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
7. I usually don't study here at a regular time each week.	T	F	T	F	T	F
8. My breaks tend to be too long when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
9. I tend to start conversations with people when I study here.	T	F	T	F	T	F
10. I spend time on the phone here that I should be using for study.	T	F	T	F	T	F
11. There are many things here that don't have anything to do with study or school work.	T	F	T	F	T	F
12. Temperature conditions here are not very good for studying.	T	F	T	F	T	F
13. Chair, table, and lighting arrangements here are not very helpful for studying.	T	F	T	F	T	F
14. When I study here, I am often distracted by people-watching.	T	F	T	F	T	F

Now total the circles in each column. The column which has the most "true" circles may be the poorest place to study. Use the back of this sheet to design improvements in your study area.

Sometimes it's Hard to Remember...

- Because there's no desire to remember, no interest in the material, and thus no clear reason to remember.
- Because the material to be remembered hasn't first been understood.
- Because the initial reading and study wasn't done with the intent to remember, but with the idea of just underlining now and then really learning the material "later."
- Because most forgetting takes place rapidly, right after initial learning unless some effort is made to use the new information or recall and "store" the information for later use.
- Because most study time has been just passively re-reading and "looking over" the material to be learned.
- Because the form of study was inappropriate to the use of the material required on an exam.

Activities Designed to Increase Memory...

- Meditate a while to find a reason to remember: talk with the instructor or with students who do seem interested in the material to learn what motivates them. Write down your reason, once found, and keep it around for periodic pep talks with yourself when needed.
- Try to get a "bird's-eye-view" of the whole system before attempting to remember details of each part. Read a simplified version or critique of the material before re-tackling the original. Ask for help early if you've tried and just can't understand. CAUTION: initial understanding should be complete well before the test in order that the last few days can be spent reviewing. Don't wait until the last minute to try to understand.
- Read with the intent to remember; that is, read actively to identify and hold yourself responsible for information that needs to be remembered. Make the first reading count!
- Take the few extra moments required at the time of initial reading to stop and mentally test yourself over what you've just read. Immediate recall of newly learned information is the essential first step to later memory of it.
- Spend most study time (more than 50% of it) in recalling and testing to see how much of the material is still unlearned. Having once learned and immediately tested by trying to recall the information, continue to test yourself at periodic intervals. Expose as many senses as possible to the information: write it, speak it, hear it, visualize it. Familiar, well-learned things assume identities of their own and are not likely to confuse or be confused with somewhat similar things.
- Practice using the information for a quiz: predict essay questions and actually write answers; work problems, etc. It's one thing to know material and another to be able to "use" it on exam questions.

CONCENTRATION...and your BODY

SURE...the pressure of deadlines and expectations, and inertia, make us forget our body's needs...

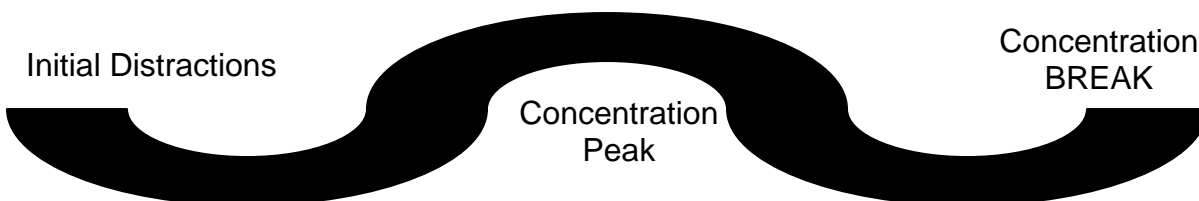
BUT...if we do, the quality of our life lessens. We may become listless and disinterested, and fatigue may cause panic which can limit performance.

THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER maintain good habits of diet, sleep and rest.

- Take 10 minutes to relax before meals; eat well-balanced food slowly; make mealtime an opportunity to calm down.
- Choose an exercise you enjoy...jogging, swimming, yoga, etc., and build up gradually until it's a regular part of your week.
- Schedule 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night and plan a regular bedtime.

EACH TIME YOU STUDY, plan to use your body to help you concentrate.

- Choose or create a study environment with a straight but comfortable chair that fits you, a desk with all the equipment you need, daylight or indirect light which is bright enough but doesn't glare on your book or in your eyes.
- Study according to your biorhythm: schedule your most difficult subjects when you are at a peak mental efficiency (after 10 p.m.? early morning?) and plan to do physical tasks, like compiling a bibliography at the library, when you are mentally at low efficiency.
- Know and respect your own concentration span. When you begin a study session, gather your materials, relax, plan what you want to accomplish, and energetically begin. When your mind wanders, call yourself back to the task. But when you find yourself consistently daydreaming or working without comprehension, stop and TAKE A BREAK. For 5 or 10 minutes, listen to music, talk to someone, take a walk, do a chore, daydream, relax. Then repeat the cycle and begin studying again.



DURING DEADLINE AND TEST STRESS don't let pressure cause you to ignore your body!

- Make every minute count by turning meals, time spent traveling by bus or car, or walking across campus into opportunities for relaxation and exercise.
- During long study sessions, drink lots of fluids, increase caloric intake, and eat frequent small meals. Use coffee, tea and soft drinks only to stay awake...unless you can't sleep.
- Plan breaks to include light exercise to help you stay awake and revitalized.
- Don't oversleep. If you must cut down on sleep, try going to bed at your regular bedtime and getting up early.
- If you are keyed up or anxious, relax yourself periodically. If you can't sleep, exercise during the day and plan to spend 30 minutes before you go to bed relaxing.