

# CONCENTRATION

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## Some causes of poor concentration and suggested solutions:

**I. EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS** - TV, music, noise, interruptions - those elements in your environment that cause a break in concentration. To eliminate external distractions, FIND A GOOD PLACE TO STUDY.

**HOW:** Make that place specific to studying. Don't use your study space for bull sessions, building model airplanes, sleeping, etc.

**WHY:** When you sit down at this place you know you are there to study. The place becomes a cue for you, lets you build the habit of studying when you are there.

**HOW:** Make sure your study area has good lighting, proper ventilation, a comfortable chair, and a desk or table large enough to spread out your materials. Also be sure you have the proper materials handy, such as a dictionary, note cards, a stapler, paper clips, and other supplies.

**WHY:** Good lighting, ventilation, and a comfortable chair help you stay alert. A well stocked area cuts down on interruptions to get needed items, and a large surface insures easy locating of things on your work space.

**HOW:** Make sure your study place does not have a stereo, TV, telephone, refrigerator, or a good view of the action.

**WHY:** Answering the phone, trips to the refrigerator, and looking up at the view or the TV are all interruptions. Regarding the use of a stereo or radio, research shows that having background music on while studying can affect the amount of material learned. It is strongly recommended that you study without it.

**II. INTERNAL DISTRACTIONS** - worries, daydreams, personal problems, thinking of other things - those elements within you that cause a break in concentration.

Internal distractions are more difficult to eliminate than external ones. Reducing them is not a matter of will power, but rather involves planning and finding ways to FREE YOUR MIND FOR STUDYING.

**HOW:** Indecision and daydreaming: These can be reduced by deciding what to study when, by developing interest in your subjects, and by setting time limits for studying.

**WHY:** Indecision about what to study is a time waster. Daydreaming is a way of escaping from things we don't like to do or a way of responding to trying to study too long without a break.

**HOW:** Personal problems: If personal worries distract you while you study, you need to take positive steps to work on these problems. Set time aside to deal with these problems, either by yourself or with the help of friends or counselors. List and prioritize your problems and develop plans to deal with them one at a time.

**WHY:** Personal problems frequently can't be put off until the end of the term. Also, worrying alone does not make them go away. Talking them out and developing a plan of action can help reduce your concern so that you can study.

**HOW:** Other details: Keep a card in your study area and write down appointments and errands when they occur to you. Jot down ideas or reactions to reading so you can think about it later.