

Increase Your Focus To Be More Productive



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Introduction

In our lives today, we are busier than ever before. We think technology has streamlined many tasks, but instead we are given more tools that give us more and more to do with less time to do it. We are stressed and overwhelmed. The phrase “time management” has become taboo, since it implies there are different ways to cram even more into our already overflowing lives.

We have been lead to believe that if we don't multitask every minute of our day we will not be productive. This can't be farther from the truth. Successful people have long realized that focus is the key to being productive.

Most of what we say and do is not essential. If you can eliminate it, you'll have more time, and more tranquility. Ask yourself at every moment, 'Is this necessary?' ~Marcus Aurelius

Increasing your focus means you should get up each day, looking forward to what you can achieve. Being focused means you are making progress towards what is most important to you. You will feel a greater sense of productivity and fulfillment.

Learn why focus is important in both your personal and professional life in the following pages. You'll learn tips and strategies on gaining and keeping your focus so you can be productive in everything you do.

Multitasking is one of the most overrated skills people claim to have. In this report you'll find out why you shouldn't be multitasking, and what you should be doing instead to increase your productivity.

Ready to get started.

Why focus is important

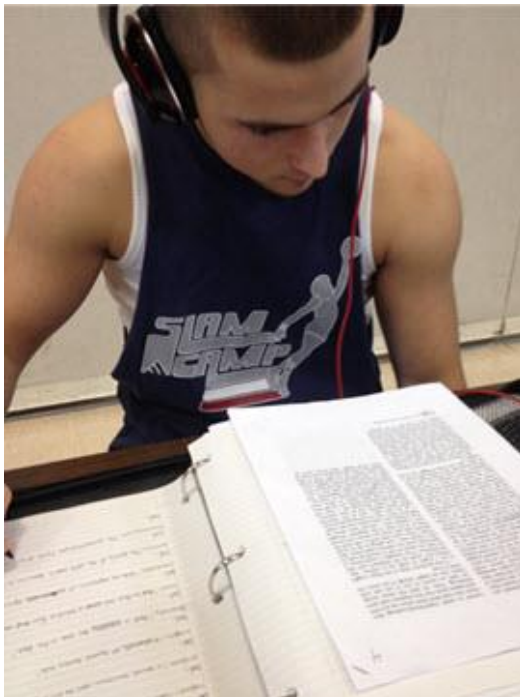
Why is being focused so important in today's world? What results happen when you are focused? Does being focused make you less stressed? Happier? If it's so important, why don't people focus more?

Being focused on one thing for a certain period of time allows you to do a better quality of work, more work gets done quicker, and your creative ideas flow easier. Being focused on one task at a time is less stressful on your mind. And being less stressed allows you be happier.

It's difficult for people to remain focused on one task for a variety of reasons. For one, we live in a world where we are constantly bombarded with TV, radio, cell phones, Internet, Social Media, as well as a much larger population that lives closer together than ever before.

It's difficult to get completely away from all these distractions. One way is to go to a room where you can shut your door and turn off your phone and email notifications.

- When you focus on a single task, avoiding distractions, your brain becomes focused on that task alone. This lets you complete that task much more quickly than if you are trying to complete two or more tasks at once. For instance, let's say you need to write a blog post, do your bookkeeping for the week and research information for an upcoming speech. The best thing to do is to set aside all but one task. So, for this example, you want to give all your attention writing your blog post. That means turning off the TV, cell phones, social media pings, closing your door and putting all your attention on writing.

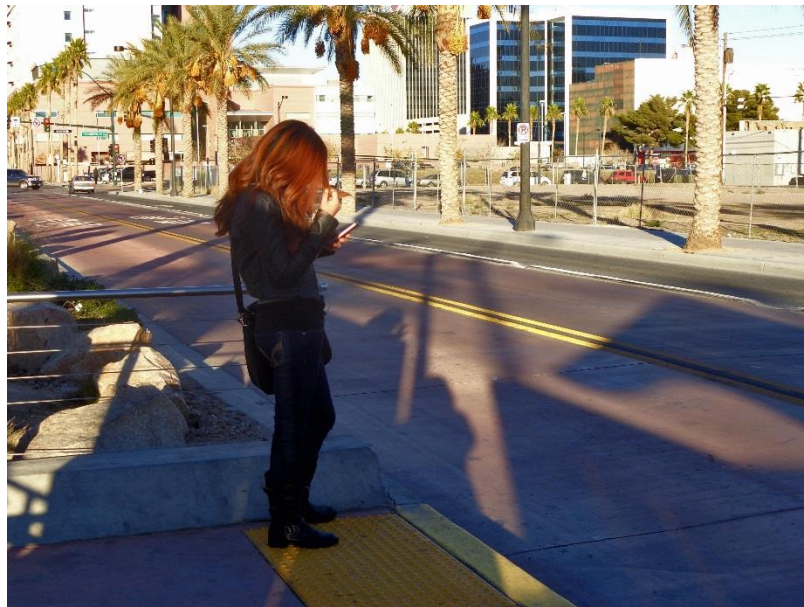


- By giving all your attention to the task without distraction, you can get it done much more quickly and with fewer mistakes. Your work will be higher quality as well. Another benefit to

being focused is that your creativity will kick in too. You'll come up with new ideas associated with the task at hand.

This is great if you are someone who creates in some way. This includes traditional creative types like artists, writers, photographers, designers and musicians, as well as people who create products or services, teachers, researchers, stay-at-home parents, executives, bloggers, and anyone who needs ideas. This means just about everyone can benefit.

- Being constantly connected to others and having many distractions that take away your focus can affect your stress levels as well as your productivity. When you aren't focused, you don't get as much done as you could if you were truly focused on the task you're doing.



- Focusing on one thing for a certain period of time helps you think better. Having your mind scattered over several tasks at once keeps you from thinking about what you are actually doing. You only have time to complete a task quickly before you must move on to the next one. All the while you are trying to remember everything that has to be done. When you focus, you are able to think about only one thing for that period of time.
- Focusing allows your subconscious to do the work. Think about when you learned to ride a bike or drive a car. It was difficult in the beginning, but when you began focusing on what you were doing, your subconscious took over and helped you learn. The same is true in your everyday tasks. Once you begin

focusing solely on one task, your subconscious helps you do them quicker and easier.

It's important to focus on one task at a time to become more productive, do better quality work and be less stressed. Focusing can help you be more creative and have more happiness.

Multitasking is overrated

If you're like many people you spend most days multitasking. You're probably so used to multitasking that you don't even realize when you're doing it. After all, it's a skill many employers look for in their employees. Many people believe multitasking saves them time. There are many reasons why multitasking is bad. It's better to focus instead though.

Focusing lets you concentrate on one task or thought at a time, helping you create a better result for each task.

Many people like to multitask because they become bored working on one task at a time.

Why is multitasking bad?

You have to switch from task to task. This actually slows you down because your mind has to take time to change into the right mindset for the new task. You have to take the time to remember where you left off, as you switch back and forth amongst tasks.

1. Multitasking leads to attention and memory loss. According to a study by Harvard Professor Clifford Nass, in findings published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, people who use online social media and other forms of electronic communications have trouble focusing their attention and have *lower scores on memory tests*.



2. Cognitive performance is diminished. A recent study by Zheng Wang, a professor at Ohio State University, showed that multitasking caused students to feel more productive, but showed they were actually reducing their cognitive abilities such as studying skills.

3. It turns people off when you are interacting with them (or not really interacting with them). People who multitask often find themselves coming in contact with others. If you only half pay attention to them, answering texts and phone calls while talking to them, you

will lose their respect. And as a business owner, this is rude and could easily cost you business.

4. Multitaskers lose productivity. Switching between tasks is counter-productive. You lose time and concentration every time you switch to a different task.
5. *Multitaskers are less likely to finish* one quality project. They may finish all their tasks for the day, but they will most likely be sub-par than if they had focused solely on one to completion.

Multitasking makes it difficult to focus entirely on each task you are doing. You are thinking about emails you have to respond to when writing a report and the phone calls you need to return even while you are thinking about the next task on your to-do list. This type of working environment doesn't do anything but cause you stress. Instead of multitasking among several tasks, you should prioritize your tasks and break them up into workable time chunks.

Tips to improve focus

Maybe you want to focus on a single task, but find yourself easily distracted. You find it difficult to focus on what you are doing because you find your mind wandering, you're worrying about everything or maybe you just have way too many things you need to do to make a choice of just one task to start with.

Here are some valuable tips on how to improve your focus.

Meditate



Try to allocate at least 30 minutes each day to meditate. If you can't dedicate that much time you can still do a short breathing exercise. Focus on your breathing, really focusing on the air, how it touches your nostrils and enters your lips. How does it feel as it escapes? Your mind may wander, filling with endless amount of thoughts. When this happens bring your thoughts back to focusing on your breathing. Continue this process for several minutes.

Regulating your breathing relaxes your circulatory system and brings you a sense of peace.

Listen

Listen to music to help improve your focus. Really concentrate on the music. Try to focus on a single instrument.

Cut goals into small targets

Having an end goal in mind while working on tasks can frustrate if your target goal is too big or too difficult. Then your results won't be quick, and it may seem like you aren't getting any closer to the end. Instead of working toward the ultimate end goal, break it down into smaller, more achievable goals you can reach within a few days. Then cross each smaller goal off your list as you achieve it.

Time clock

Work within your body's most comfortable time period. Maybe you work best early in the morning before sunrise. Or late at night. Work when you are most productive. For example many authors get up early to do their writing, while artists often do their best

work late at night. You know yourself best, so you know when you are at your best. Now protect that time and make it work for you with focused activity.



Exercise

Exercise your mind and body every day. Do crossword puzzles. Engage in lively discussions. Build something that's creative. A simple 30 minute walk every day is all you need to keep your body healthy.

Force yourself

You may need to push yourself some when you're just not feeling it. Those days when you hit a mental roadblock, though, take some time away from the task. Do something else until you can regain your focus on the original task.

Learning to improve you focus will take time but it is worth it.

Begin by implementing one or two of these tips into your day to begin changing how well you can become focused.

Strategies to Improve Focus

You'd be surprised by how many people lose track of where their time goes. They might think they are focused on a single task, but are they really? One way to find out is to keep track of how you spend your time for a week. You might find out you've been wasting time on little things like checking Facebook once an hour.

Here are my strategies for improving your focus and increasing your productivity:

1. Track your time, aka a time study. Analyze the results after a week. Tweak and get rid of time wasters.
2. Plan your week. At the end of your week, find a quiet spot to plan out your week's tasks. Write down key projects and the tasks associated with them. Don't forget to add in family activities that you participate in as well.
3. Prioritize your list. Break down your tasks from most important to least important. Use a calendar to mark out blocks of uninterrupted time (anywhere from 15 to 60 minutes) to work on each one.
4. Eliminate what isn't essential. Outsource what you can for things you need to do but which aren't your strengths. This could be anything from mowing your lawn to hiring a virtual assistant to take care of your social media for the week.
5. Set your goals. Break down big or long-term goals into smaller weekly or daily goals to make them easier to focus on.
6. Set aside a specific amount of time each day for checking/answering email and social media. It could be the first 30 minute task of the day, the last 30 minutes of your work day, or maybe the 15 minutes before your lunch break. Only do it once a day though. Don't stop in the middle of a task to check your email. The same goes for social media as well.
7. Do away with multitasking. It takes a while to learn how to focus on one project at a time, but stick with it and it will become a habit. Finish one project/task before moving on to the next one. Become laser-focused on one task at a time. *This will really increase your productivity.*
8. Make a distraction to-do list. The Internet has made it easy for us to become quickly distracted. As soon as we want to look something up, we hop on the Internet to do a search. "What was the name of the actor in that movie?" "How long will it take me to drive to the zoo tomorrow?" Anytime we get distracted like this it takes about 25

minutes to get back to the original task. So instead, next time you want to look up something or an idea pops in your head, jot it down on a piece of paper (or, even better, use Evernote).

9. Learn to say NO. If you already have full day's task list, don't feel like you have to take on another project for someone else. This is so important. It may be hard at first, but over time as you see your productivity grow, you will want to protect your time and saying no will get easier.

10. Create an environment that works for you. Do you need a quiet space, free from people, phones and television noise? Set up your office so it works for you. Decorate it in soothing colors, inspiring artwork and a comfortable chair. If you work best in a neat and clean area, make sure you put away or file papers and magazines. Get rid of clutter. If you focus better while listening to music or some kind of ambient noise, be sure to have a way to make that happen.

11. Take a break when needed. Short breaks help break up boredom and burnout when you're working on a big project. Get up and walk around the room. Do some yoga stretches.

12. Break up or Chunk it. Break your tasks down into smaller more manageable chunks of time with short breaks in between. For example, work on a task in 15 minute chunks. For example, let's say you're writing an eBook. Don't try to do the whole thing at once. Break it down. Take 15 minutes to write out your outline. Take a short break. Then 15 minutes to research the first chapter. And so on.

13. Use an app on your phone to boost your productivity and concentration. Apps like Evernote can keep you organized and keep track of distractions. An app like Brainwave can be downloaded to your iPhone. In this app, you can choose settings like Concentration Boost and Problem Solving, Brainstorming, or Memory Boost and Creative Thinking. There are other apps that help you stay focused and productive as well.

The strategies for becoming more focused are endless. Make lists. Remove distractions. Set up your ideal environment. *You need to find what works best for your style of working.*

Exercises to Improve Focus

When TV newscaster Diane Sawyer was asked the secret to her success, she said, "I think the one lesson I've learned is there is no substitute for paying attention."

Did you know improving your focus can be done with different types of simple exercises? It's true. Something as simple as getting exercise on a daily basis or chewing gum can improve your brain function, which leads to better focus. Most of the time, focus exercises take less than ten minutes to do.

Check out these to get you started:

- Mutter to yourself. It might seem like you're crazy but talking to yourself either out loud or not, helps you pay attention, calms you emotionally and tells you to act.
- (Check out the 8 ways to make your brain smarter at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/28/how-to-focus_n_3795523.html)
- Trade your caffeine for cardio. Caffeine gives you a boost, which makes it easier to concentrate. But you might find it harder to focus when you're not buzzed. A better way to keep your mind stimulated is with physical exercise. Exercise triggers the release of chemicals in the brain that affect our learning and memory, which in the end are what help us focus.
- Drink more water. Mild dehydration can lead to distraction. Being even as little as 2 percent dehydrated can affect your ability to concentrate on cognitive activities.
- Get plenty of shut-eye. Getting at least seven hours of good quality sleep each night helps your body and mind rejuvenate and leads to better concentration and focus during the day.

Here are some Concentration exercises taken from the Success Consciousness website. (LoriLikes.Me/Focus)

Exercise 1

Count the words in any paragraph from a book. Count them again. Repeat until it's easy.

Now count the words in two paragraphs. Repeat until it becomes easy.

Finally count all the words on the page. Count mentally and with your eyes only. Don't use your finger to point to each word.

Exercise 2

Count from one hundred backwards to one.

Exercise 3

Count backwards from one hundred, by threes, for example 100, 97, 94 and so on.

Exercise 4

Pick an inspiring word or simple sound. Repeat it silently for five minutes. When this becomes easy, try doing it for ten minutes continually.

Exercise 5

Hold a piece of fruit in your hands. Examine it, keeping your entire attention focused on the fruit. Just focus on the fruit, ignoring other thoughts. Examine its shape, the smell of it, how it's texture feels when you touch it and how it tastes in your mouth.

Exercise 6

Visualize a piece of fruit. First examine a piece of fruit for 2 minutes. Then close your eyes and visualize how it feels, looks and smells. Try to visualize a clear image. If the image gets blurry, look at the fruit again for a few seconds then close your eyes and try to visualize it again.

It's never been harder to stay focused than at this time in history. We are distracted by technology and everything happening around us. You can regain focus though by doing different exercises that can help you build your concentration.

How to deal with focus issues

You probably already know how hard it is to focus on something. Focus issues are often the result of different things like boredom, lack of interest or even fatigue.

Concentration can often be attributed by how motivated and interested we are in the task.

There are ways to deal with focus issues.

- Supplements can help you when you are having focus issues. Vitamins like the B complex group, Biotin or vitamin H and lecithin all help improve your memory.
- Eating the right foods can help you better focus as well since you will be getting the supplements from the foods to help with brain health. Foods like lean meat, beans, oranges, peanut butter and oysters.
- Consult with your physician if you find you can't focus on any one thing for any length of time. Lack of focus can be a symptom of several different conditions, including depression. Get a thorough checkup to rule out any physical causes of your lack of focus issues.
- When working on projects on your computer and online, make sure you only have tabs open that are relevant to what you are doing. This keeps you from getting distracted by all that fun information floating around on the World Wide Web.
- Make your tasks routine. Set up a routine for tasks that you do every day. For example, check your email and social media at the same time every day. Just like you probably have a routine when you wake up, you should also have a routine when working.
- Separate your day into a time for creating, time for work and communication, and time for yourself. Split the day up in whatever way works best for you.
- Dealing with focus issues causes your productivity to drop. By learning how to take care of your focus issues through your diet, exercise and routines, you can be more productive.

Applied Focus

You can increase your productivity and accomplish more in less time by using a technique called applied focus. Applied focus can help you avoid the little distractions that can derail your efforts at productivity.

How applied focus increases productivity

Applied focus is a strategy that helps you multiply your productivity. Each session is 45 minutes long, with a 15 minute shift in focus. Or you can do 90 minutes followed by 30 minute shift in focus. In other words, you stop focusing intentionally on your task and do something completely different in the shift focus period. During the focused session, though, you don't allow anything to distract you (except a dire emergency). Phone calls are out, email is off, texting and Facebook are off limits.

Here are some guidelines (be sure to adjust them as necessary to fit your individual situation):

1. Open only one browser or application window at a time. So if you're writing a blog post, only your word processor or text pad is open.
2. Keep your sessions timed. Don't go past your 45 or 90 minute session, no matter how focused you are. You need the break.
3. Get away from your task. Get up from your desk, walk around, get a drink or snack. Give your mind a break.
4. Be prepared ahead of time. Do your research during a different applied focus session then from the writing session. That way you're able to concentrate on the writing alone.
5. Have a session set up for email, telephone and social media time.

Applied focus sessions can increase your productivity but it will take some getting used to. Start slowly by scheduling one or two sessions a day. Once you become used to the routine, you will notice an improvement in your concentration and productivity.

What's next?

Learning how to focus on one task at a time takes time and commitment. In our busy lives we are pulled in many directions at one time. It's best to begin your journey on a more focused life gradually by implementing the tips and strategies found within this report.

Focus is such an important part of how productive you are. If you can focus on one task for a set amount of time you will be more productive in a shorter amount of time than you have been. Putting aside your tendency to multitask will improve your productivity as well, since you will be able to finish one task before you move on.

Removing distractions can help you focus as well. Create an environment that you feel comfortable in, and that fits with how you work. If you're a morning person, then focus on your work tasks, and vice versa for night owls.

I hope you have realized how much you can accomplish when you focus. As you move forward with your business and with your goal of getting organized, staying focused will help you get there faster and with even better results.

Lori Winslow

The Organized Solopreneur

To get your complimentary copy of "Top 10 Ways to Get Your Solopreneur Business Organized" [click here](#).

About The Author

I don't know where the desire came from to create order, though probably from my mother - but I do remember as a kid that I liked to mess up the monopoly money so I could straighten it back out - so yeah - I'm that kind of geek :)

As an employee, I always ended up creating systems for repetitive tasks in the office or documenting the tasks being done. I have created more process manuals than I can remember, but I didn't even know that's what they were called until several years after I had already been doing it.

I spent most of my professional career in the medical field, and have helped create systems in many different types of businesses.

As a certified coach, I bring a strong ability to listen and to cut to the heart of the matter. Excuses won't get your business organized.

Of course, I don't limit the content on this site to just your business. I believe that working from home creates a different set of challenges and since we work at home - it's all related.



Additional Resources

[The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing](#) by Marie Kondo

[The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business](#) by Charles Duhigg

[10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works--A True Story](#) by Dan Harris

[The Happiness Project \(Revised Edition\): Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun](#) by Gretchen Rubin

[Move Your Stuff, Change Your Life: How to Use Feng Shui to Get Love, Money, Respect and Happiness](#) by Karen Rauch Carter

[The 30 Day Productivity Plan](#) by Dennis Becker

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