

Improve your Concentration

memory

Everyone struggles with the ability to concentrate sometimes. Ask yourself the following questions to see which suggestion apply to you. Here are some tips to help:

Your Body	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you practicing healthy personal habits?	Maintaining a good diet, getting enough rest (7-9 hours), and regular exercise can all improve concentration.
<input type="checkbox"/> Are medical issues interfering with your ability to focus?	Consider whether you need a medical consult re. hearing, vision, or a disorder (such as ADHD).
Your Brain	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you lacking interest in the subject matter?	<p>Try to create interest by finding ways to be curious about the subject:</p> <p>Before class: look over course material; do assigned readings, and prepare questions or opinions for class.</p> <p>In class: Arrive prepared to participate.</p> <p>Studying: Find unique ways to make material meaningful for you—relate it to other courses, to knowledge you already have, or to your life. Talk with friends and classmates about what you are learning.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you lacking motivation?	Identify a goal for your class. Picture yourself achieving that goal. Focus on the positive aspects of the course or the instructor.
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel overwhelmed, stressed or anxious? Are your emotions distracting you?	Start with positive self-talk, and breaking down big tasks into small, manageable chunks. Then make time to talk with a friend. Still struggling, schedule a visit at the SPU Counseling Center (206-281-2657). Reach out for resources!

Your Environment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Where do you sit in class?	Are you sitting front and center? Students who do are generally more engaged with the material and get better grades.
<input type="checkbox"/> Where do you read, write and study?	Find a spot where you are least distracted (Hint: NOT in your room). Turn off your phone. Work for 30-40 minutes and then take a short break that gets you moving (walk, stairs, crunches). Return for more study.
Your Time	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you having trouble getting started?	Find a regular time to study each day so that you create a habit. Try breaking your assignments into smaller chunks so you can make progress and not feel overwhelmed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you setting realistic study goals?	Note how long can you concentrate. Then take a brief break and return to study. Aim for a minimum of 3-4 hours a day, but do it when you are most focused (Hint: best times are between 8 am-9 pm)
Your Organization	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you organizing your course materials?	If your materials are organized, you will be better able to focus. Three-hole punching handouts, placing them in a binder, and getting dividers can make a big difference.
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you keep a to-do list?	Having a notebook or a phone feature where you keep track of what you need to do or remember can help you stay organized. Need more help? Stop by the Center for Learning. We can help you get organized.