

HOW TO PAY ATTENTION



ALLOW

BOREDOM

STOP

MULTITASKING

AND PRACTICE

MINDFULNESS

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ALLOW BOREDOM

Boredom and daydreaming actually helps us work through ideas about the future.



A study found that 77% of participants 18-24 agreed that "When nothing is occupying my attention, the first thing I do is reach for my phone." If you are constantly occupying your mind by scrolling through social media, listening to music, or watching tv, you don't allow yourself to experience deep mind-wandering.

Challenge Yourself!

Try to notice when your mind is wandering when you really need to pay attention, like in class. When something is either too easy or too challenging, it becomes boring. Find something in the material that is interesting to you, or something that is challenging yet reachable.

Doyle, T., Zakrajsek, T. (2019) *The new science of learning: How to learn in harmony with your brain* (2nd edition). Stylus.

STOP MULTITASKING

"When trying to do two cognitively demanding tasks at once, the brain temporarily shuts down one task while trying to do the other."

Multitasking: Driving while listening to a podcast. You can easily engage in the automatic task of driving while processing the information of the podcast.

Task shifting: Texting while listening to a lecture. Your brain shifts from listening to the lecture information to processing reading and responding to the text.

Try giving your full attention to class, homework, or studying by turning your phone off!



*Doyle, T., Zakrajsek, T. (2019)
The new science of learning:
How to learn in harmony with
your brain (2nd edition). Stylus.*

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

By practicing mindfulness meditation, you can improve your attention span and other cognitive abilities. This skill requires practice, though, and is not some quick fix.

Things that DO NOT improve your ability to pay attention: Vitamins B6, B12, and E; beta carotene; folic acid; and flavonoids.

Through research, mindfulness meditation has been shown to "increase the thickness of brain regions that control attention and process sensory signals from the outside world."

Getting started with mindfulness meditation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_yXe_6mYTA

10-minute guided meditation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p_yaNFSYao

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