

## 25 Ways to Improve Motivation & Concentration

1. Identify a comfortable study location. Check lighting, noise, comfort of furniture, etc., in a few places to determine which spot works best for you.
2. Make sure you have all the needed tools (i.e. notebook, charger) before beginning a study session.
3. Choose a regular time to study each day so that you set a pattern.
4. Have a reminder pad for jotting down extraneous thoughts that enter your mind while you are studying (e.g. texting a friend).
5. Use a symbol for studying. Choose an item, like a hat, that you put on when, and only when, you are studying or an item that you place on your desk as you study.
6. Relax your body before you start studying.
7. Give yourself an affirmation and/or an image that will motivate you.
8. Do some alternate nostril breathing before you begin study. Do 3 rounds, starting with your right nostril, break 3 rounds starting with your left nostril, break, 3 rounds starting with your right nostril.
9. Imagine that your brain is filled with the subject that you are going to study and that there is no room for anything else. See that the entrances to your mind are blocked by that subject.
10. Take two minutes before reading to jot down everything you expect to come up in the text that you are about to read.
11. Employ and [SQ3R technique](#) to begin each subject.
12. Break assignments into small step-by-step tasks.
13. Analyze your study skills to make sure that your problem is one of concentration, not faulty study skills.

14. Look for a special interest in each subject for which you do not feel motivated. For example, if Biology does not thrill you but you are interested in keeping your body in good shape, you may be able to develop an interest in nutrition, the effects of exercise on muscles, etc.
15. Develop a contract for a particular study problem. Decide if you are more responsive to reward or punishment and construct a contract accordingly. For example an award could be, "For every 10 pages read, I can listen to music for 10 minutes". Chart your progress for five study sessions before making modifications.
16. Set realistic study goals.
17. Solve some of the problems that are interrupting your concentration (i.e., speak to your professor about the lecture that you didn't understand).
18. Keep a pencil in your hand while studying so that you can be an active participant in the process.
19. When you find that you are not concentrating, take some action.  
**Suggestions:** stretch, take a deep breath, or stand up every time your mind wanders.
20. Take a short break after every 20-40 minutes of reading. Do not use the break for anything else, just sit back and reflect on what you have read.
21. Watch your diet. Limit the amount of junk food, sugar, and caffeine you are taking. They can give you a buzz but that doesn't really make you any more alert.
22. Exercise on a regular basis. Try exercising before you study to increase alertness.
23. Get 7-9 hours of sleep per 24-hour period (it does not all have to happen at one time—naps can be helpful).
24. Do not give in to mental fatigue—the kind that goes away when you do something besides studying. Push on and wait for the 2nd (or 3rd or 4th) "wind" that is another stage of alertness that will come if you persevere.



25. Talk about your concentration/motivation problems with a friend and/or make an appointment at the Tutoring & Academic Success Center.