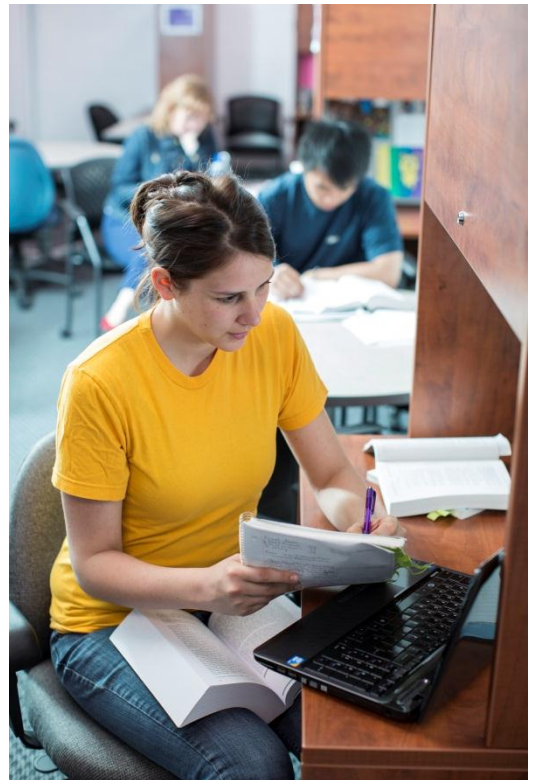


Improve Concentration

Find that your mind is wandering while you are trying to focus on your school work? Try these strategies to improve your concentration.

1. **Recognize when your mind starts to drift.** Identify if it is internal (daydreaming, worrying, nervousness or anxiety) or external (friend knocking on the door, phone call or text). What do you need to do to eliminate these distractions?
2. **Take short breaks.** If you study one subject for too long your brain is unable to absorb the information. After a short break, if you are still unable to focus, switch the subject you are working on.
3. **Set study session goals.** Determine what you are going to accomplish before you begin to study. This will help avoid daydreaming and other time wasters.
4. **Cut your work into smaller pieces.** If you are having difficulty concentrating take a break after completing one chunk. It is better to study for 30- minute intervals, and absorb the information, than to study for hours at a time only to be overwhelmed and not study at all.
5. **Make sure that you use your study space for studying.** The point is to build up association between studying and your study space. If you are studying on your bed, you are associating sleep with studying and may find yourself napping. Visit the Waterloo Library website for information on group study locations library.uwaterloo.ca/locations/groupstudy.html
6. **Use your best time of the day to study.** Are you a “morning person” or an “afternoon person”? Use the time your brain is most alert to focus on school tasks (especially the more difficult tasks).



Adapted from University of Waterloo Counselling Services

7. **Resist the temptation to complete lower priority tasks first.** Low priority tasks involve completing household chores or mindless homework before you begin the really important or difficult work. Both of these tasks can be used to avoid the more difficult work and to exaggerate your sense of accomplishment.
8. **Make sure you are taking care of yourself.** Eating nutritious food, getting the right amount of sleep and exercising will aide your concentration. If you are not treating your body well, it will be very difficult to concentrate.
9. **Visit a success coach.** If you would like more information on how to incorporate these strategies into your study routine visit a success coach. To book an appointment, visit the student success office (2nd floor of South Campus Hall) or call 519-888-4567 ext. 84410.

