

The

Power of Focus

The Ultimate Secret of Leading Achievers in the World



Dr Sylvan Lightbourne

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Introduction

Everyone wants to be successful in life. Whether it's business, pursuing your passion, your career, or building a family. Without the desire for success, humans cannot exist and thrive. While success is not an uncommon term to many, only a few people have really benefited from the sweet taste of a career. What's their secret? The focusing power.



According to a 2000 study conducted by Microsoft, an average individual has an attention span of 12 seconds. In 2015, it dropped to 8 seconds. It was supported by the study from the Technical University of Denmark, suggesting that the short attention span is due to information overload. So many things are demanding our attention that we can only focus on one thing at a time for a short period.

Another study from the University of California at Irvine reveals that workers in a technical field could only focus on working on a project for 11 minutes before they are distracted by their surroundings. To make it worst, it took them 25 minutes of wandering and being distracted before they are able to get back on track.

This short attention span has introduced a lot of issues and difficulties. People are struggling to finish one task without jumping into the next. Most of them cannot focus on consuming one trend before they consume another. According to the Oracle ID Graph, the average person has five devices. That means we have endless choices on what and where to get the information we want. The more we are surrounded by information, the more we feel overwhelmed. As a result, none of the tasks we wrote on our to-do list is accomplished.

It's quite frustrating, right? You meticulously wrote down these tasks, knowing that each step brings you closer to your success. But if you can't finish a single task, how long before you reach your success? Or will you even reach it if you are stuck on the same task and stagnant for the past years? This is the main reason why people settle for less and give up on their ambitions.

But worry no more because this book will help you to succeed using the power of focus!

It's high time to take control of your life and get what you wanted. No matter how ambitious it is, you can get anything you want with the power of focus. This book will define the power of focus, causes for a short attention span, and how to break this bad habit. We will break it down and discuss it phase by phase. As a special chapter, you will also learn excellent research-based food choices that can improve your focus.

So, drop whatever you are doing right now and focus on this book alone. Your life is about to change in the next few chapters.



Chapter 1

The Focus Power



Definition of The Focus Power

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“Always remember, your focus determines
your reality”

George Lucas

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Focus is defined by experts as the act of centering your concentration on a specific activity or interest. Focus can only occur if there is nothing else you are doing but that one task. It's when you say yes to a specific interest and no to the rest of them. Eliminating distractions is one of the prerequisites for focus.

Focus is the key to increased productivity and better work-life balance. It has the capacity to say no to other things at the present moment until you accomplish what you are here for.

Focus keeps your productivity level on all high, allowing you how to spend your day without being distracted. Focus is not just for corporate fields. It's an essential skill you need to learn to create better life decisions.

It is a thinking skill that must be developed to avoid procrastination and keep your attention and effort into a certain task until it is completed. Focus is the key to finishing a task amidst different distractions that can happen. It also serves as the foundation to reach a goal.

To put it simply, the focus will help you to live the life you want. It's not just a reaction to what's happening around you but total control of the circumstances that are happening in your life.

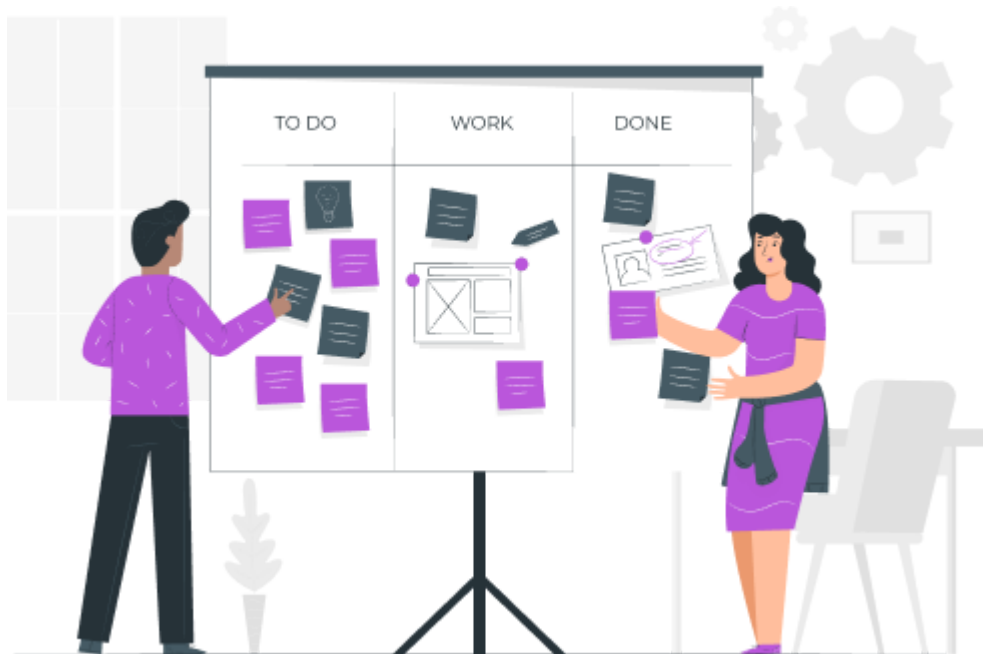
According to the author of Hack Your Brain, Elie Venezky, the focus is a muscle that anyone can build. A lot of people are under the illusion that they are not focused, and it becomes their reality. But once they ignore this unwanted belief, they are given a reality where building focus is achievable

For many people, attention is a wild beast that is hard to tame. Hence, achieving our long-term goals becomes more and more impossible. However, numerous studies reveal that people who stay focused on specific durations can give a better cognitive performance and overcome different challenges. In contrast, constantly giving in to the distractions around you can result in poor creativity and bad decisions.



Do you know that distraction isn't the only problem? Our main problem is that only a few people are trying to build habits that enable them to become focused. As a result, only the rich, successful people can benefit from the power of focus.

5 Key Elements to Staying Focused



We all have the same 24 hours. If you are wondering why your teammate can do all tasks in just a day while you remain stagnant, it's because he is focused and driven. He knows how to manage his tasks, and he is working toward a goal. Each day is a step closer to his goal.

According to Steven Kotler's book, *The Rise of Superman*, top executives are 500% more productive when they are in deep focus compared to when they are distracted. They get the most out of their 24 hours by being in a state of flow.

To improve your focus, there are elements that you need to master first. But before that, let's get to know the different sources of distractions in our lives. According to Daniel Goleman in his book *Focus: The Hidden Power of Excellence*, there are two sources of distractions that can disrupt your focus. The first is the sensory distractions that come from things that are happening around you. The second is more abstract, the emotional distractions, which come from your inner voice, the thoughts about the circumstances that are happening in your life, or a nagging feeling that you can't get rid of.

Learning how to focus can be a daunting task. Let's get you started step-by-step with the five key elements of focus.



5 Key Elements to Staying Focused

Most people blame their lack of focus on technology. The rise of smartphones, emails, news, and 24/7 access to information has shortened our attention spans. Instead of making our lives easier, technology has destroyed so many opportunities because people let themselves be distracted by it.

However, as the behavioral designer Nir Eyal says, technology must be controlled by humans and not technology controlling humans.

Manufacturers, content creators, and anyone benefiting from your attention would like you to take your attention away from you. Hence, the default settings on your phone are always designed to get your attention or distract you from work. For instance, the display of notifications can break your focus when you are doing something.



It's crucial to take some time off your phone. When you start working, make sure that your device is turned off or in a silent mode. If there are distracting websites, make sure that it is blocked before you start on the task. If possible, keep your phone out of sight when you are working. Focus on what you need to do and reply to all emails and messages on social media later. Your friends asking you for a party can wait, but your task on hand couldn't.



Create a focus-driven environment.

The environment you are working with plays a huge role in how you are able to focus on one task without getting distracted. If you sit in a cluttered room and decide to work on something, chances are, you'll end up getting distracted by the things inside the room.

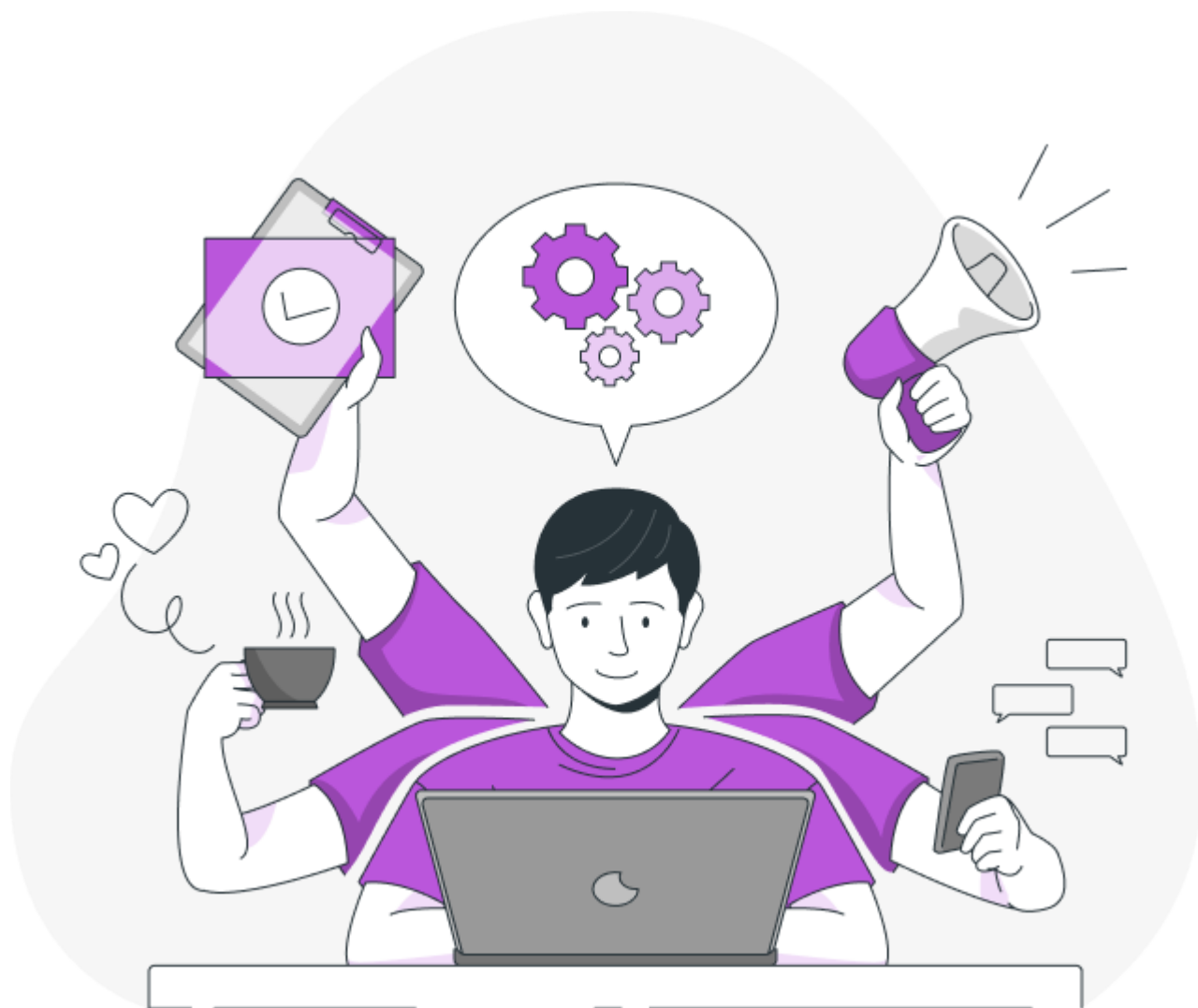
A group of neuroscientists confirmed that the more clutter, the harder it is to focus on work. It also increases stress and declines the work performance of an individual.



Hence, it's imperative that you work in a clutter-free environment. If you are working from home, clear out as much clutter as you can before sitting down at your desk. If you are in the office, make sure that your desk is clean and free of distractions. You might want to block your officemate's constant chatters by wearing noise-canceling headphones or listening to music that can boost your productivity.

Some people also use an "interruption stoplight" signal that warns other people not to disturb them as they are focused on doing something.

✔ Stop multitasking.



Your brain is wired to look for more things when you multitask. There is no clear direction of what you are supposed to do. Hence, it's crucial to practice single-tasking. It can help to pin down your focus, concentrate on what you are doing, and improve your work performance.



Limit who has access to you.

Do you know that an average worker checks email every six minutes of the day? Even if they are not expecting anything, they keep on checking their emails. Another study reveals that approximately 84% of workers keep their emails open all day long. Around 70% of them open the email within six seconds upon receipt.

That means constantly checking their emails now and then while doing their job. It doesn't sound very productive, isn't it?

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Take a real break

Being focused doesn't mean depriving yourself of the much-needed break. You need to take multiple breaks in a day so you won't strain your eyes and get stuck on something because you're feeling overwhelmed. Scrolling your Facebook feed or checking out how many likes your recent tweet got is not a real break. You need to stand up, drink water, stretch, or maybe take a walk outside.

You need to stand up, drink water, stretch, or maybe take a walk outside.

This is a real break that will give your mind a rest. It helps you to think and clear your head before you go back to work again. You need to recharge your brain; otherwise, you will suffer from burnouts.



Chapter 2

Causes of Short Attention Span



Causes of Short Attention Span

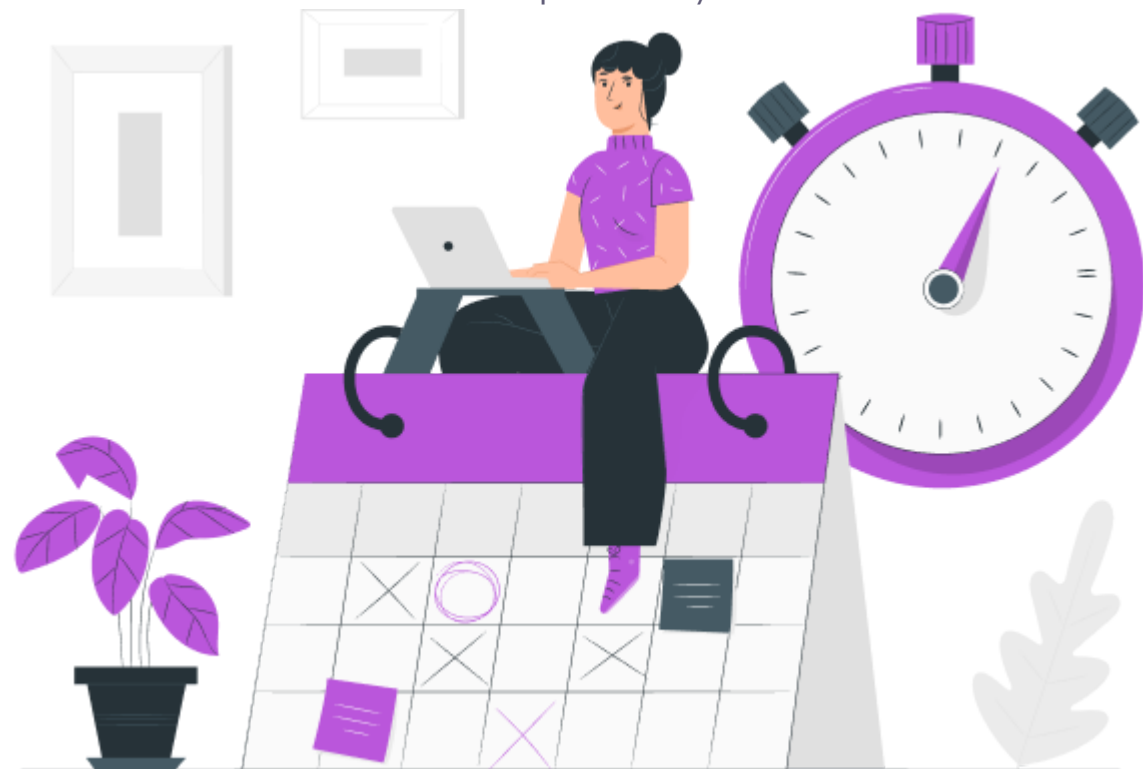
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“Be the motivation. Not the distraction.”

Robb Hill Sr.

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According to a 2010 study, we spend around 47% of our waking hours thinking about something else rather than attending to our present task. Short attention span has become unusual, and it's affecting our productivity.



A short attention span could be killing your success without you knowing it. Sometimes, it is a warning sign of an underlying condition, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

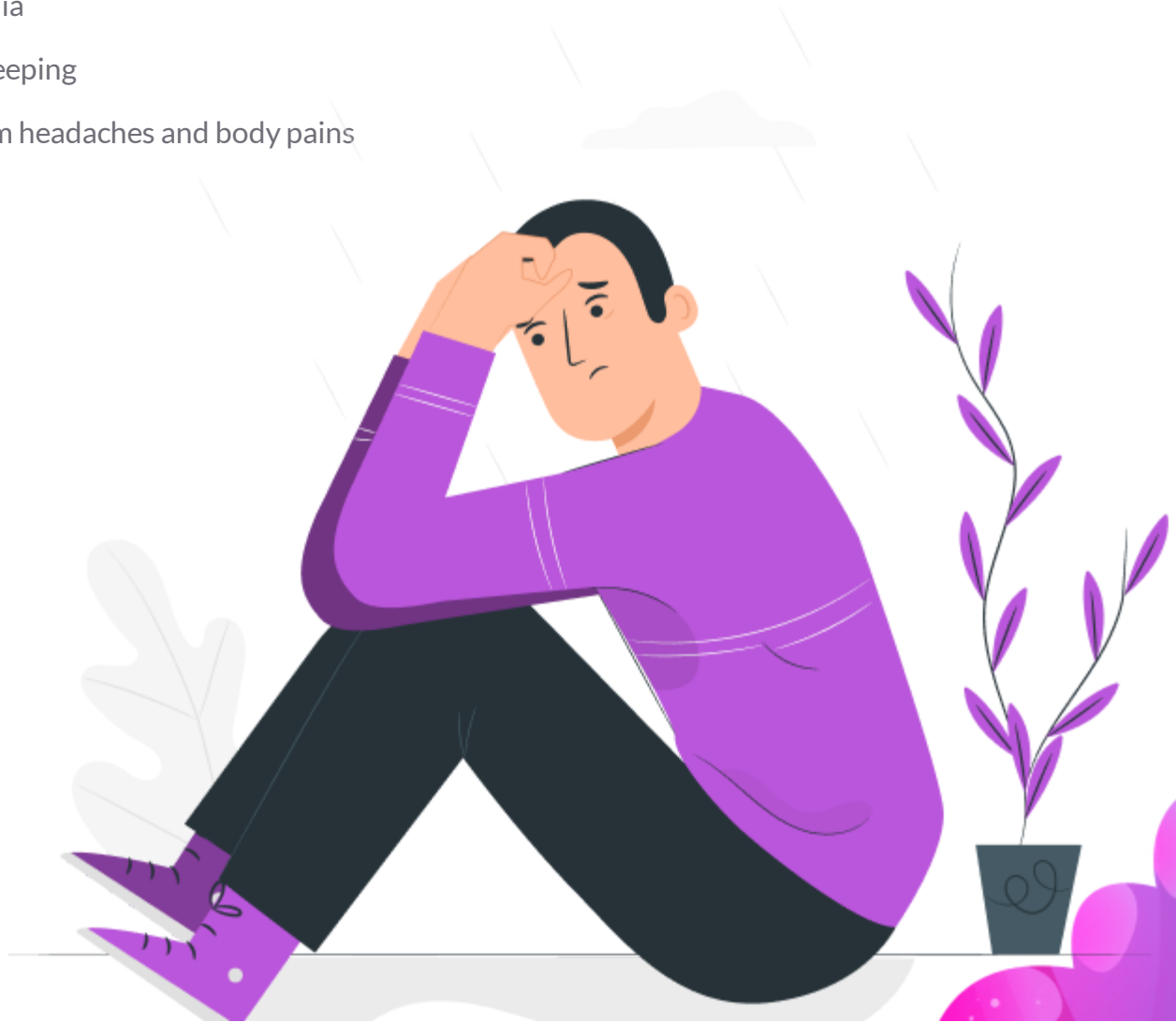
Here are the following causes of short attention span that are worth examining:

Depression

Depression remains the number one culprit for a short attention span. This mood disorder has affected the lives of millions of Americans. Being depressed means you are constantly feeling persistent sadness, and you have lost interest in things you once loved.

Signs and symptoms of depression:

- ✓ Constant thoughts of suicide
- ✓ Overwhelming sadness and hopelessness all of a sudden
- ✓ Loss of interest in work, school, and hobbies
- ✓ Feeling tired all the time
- ✓ Insomnia
- ✓ Oversleeping
- ✓ Random headaches and body pains





Learning Disabilities

Depression remains the number one culprit for a short attention span. This mood disorder has affected the lives of millions of Americans. Being depressed means you are constantly feeling persistent sadness, and you have lost interest in things you once loved.

Signs and symptoms of disability:



Poor memory



Poor eye-hand coordination



Poor writing skills



Difficulty following instructions



Poor reading skills



✓ ADHD

This disorder is commonly diagnosed in early childhood. ADHD prevents you from controlling sudden urges to do something and makes it difficult to pay attention to a certain task.

One of the common symptom of ADHD is being overactive. However, keep in mind that not all people with ADHD are hyperactive. Here are other signs and symptoms:

- ✓ Difficulty in time management
- ✓ Failing to organize
- ✓ Constant restlessness and anxiety
- ✓ Poor memory
- ✓ Periods of hyperfocus



🔧 Autism

Autism spectrum disorder is a neurodevelopment disorder that can cause physical, social, and behavioral challenges. One in every 68 children is diagnosed with autism. Most signs and symptoms appear in early childhood and carry on until adulthood,

including the following:

- ✓ Repetitive behaviors
- ✓ Trouble socializing
- ✓ Oversensitivity when being touched
- ✓ Difficulty expressing



Apparently, there are underlying conditions that may be causing your lack of focus. If you are experiencing more than two of the signs and symptoms from any of the conditions listed above, make sure to visit your doctor as soon as possible for a proper diagnosis.

Chapter 3

5 Reasons Why You Can't Focus



5 Reasons Why You Can't Focus

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“I don't care how much power, brilliance or energy you have. If you don't harness it and focus on a specific target, and hold it there, you're never going to accomplish as much as your ability warrant.”

Zig Ziglar

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If you are one of the many people who are having trouble staying on track, it's high time to do something about it. Lack of focus can lead to decreased productivity. Every day is a struggle for you to complete a task. It's going to become a bad habit. Before you knew it, 60 years have passed, and your endless chances of being successful are now over.

There are different reasons why you can't focus; it's not just limited to underlying medical conditions. Sometimes, the reason why you can't focus is something under your control. Fortunately, for every reason for your weak concentration, there is a remedy to improve your situation.

So, why are you not doing what should you be doing right now?

🕒 Your ADHD isn't receiving any treatment.

According to the Attention Deficit Disorder Association, approximately 5% of children are diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and up to 70% of them continue to show symptoms even as an adult? People with ADHD often have a problem with organizing, focusing on one task, and keeping up with their schedules.

There is no definite cure for this disorder, but it doesn't mean it can't get treated. You can improve your symptoms with continuous treatment. Hence, if you are diagnosed with ADHD, and you still can't get yourself to finish one task, you know it's time to visit your doctor.



✔ You are sleep-deprived.



Another obvious reason why it seems impossible to complete a basic task that you've mastered before is the lack of sleep. Do you know that your attention span is so dependent on the amount of sleep you get? If you are constantly sleep-deprived, there's a huge chance that you go to work irritated, not in the mood, and unable to focus on the task. It decreases your work performance and can even affect your relationship with your peers and officemates.

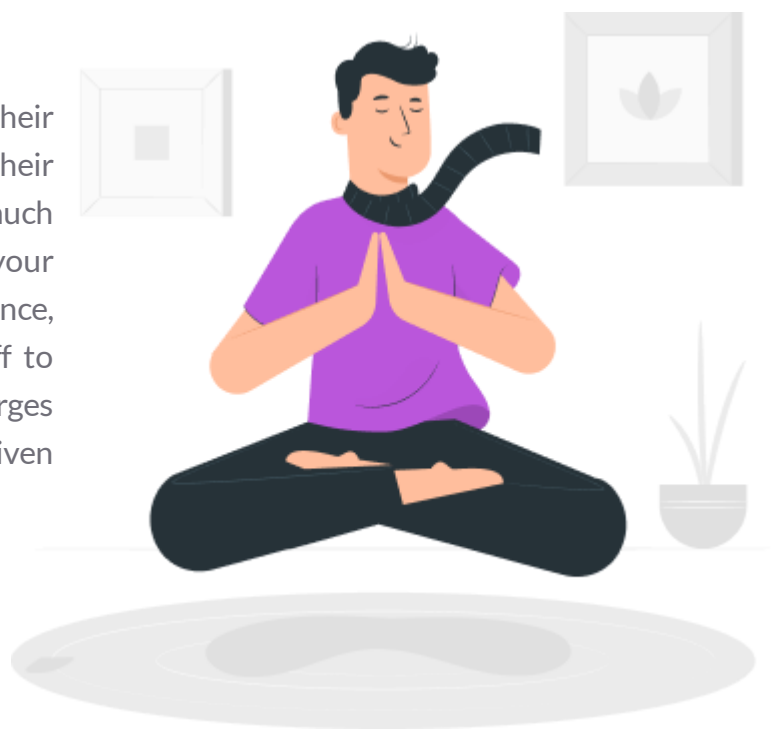
Hence, if you are constantly binge-watching on Netflix every night, depriving yourself of the rightful amount of sleep that you need, you have to stop this habit. Now. Get enough sleep and wake up tomorrow in a good mood. You will immediately notice the difference in your productivity and work performance when you are not constantly thinking about your bed at work.

🔗 You are not present in the moment.



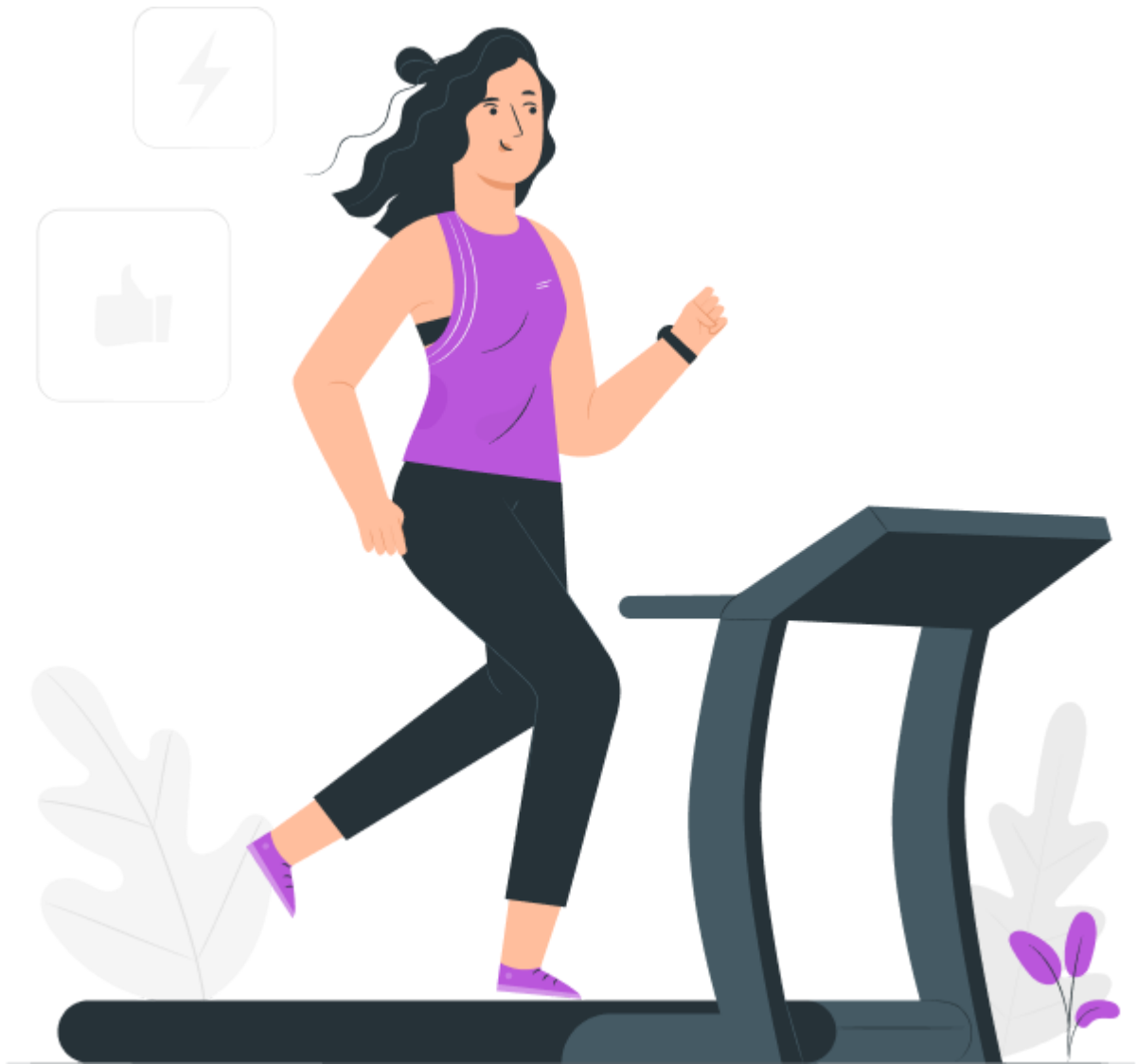
Let's go back to the definition of focus in the first chapter; it's saying yes to your task at present and no to the rest. It means you need to be mindful. And to do that, your mind must not be wandering somewhere else while you are doing your job. A 2007 study from the University of Wisconsin reveals that meditation can help to reduce distraction and improve your awareness.

People who meditate are able to control their attention and ignore distractions until their task is completed. Meditation won't take much of your time and can improve your productivity for the rest of the day. Hence, before you go to work, set some time off to meditate for at least 20 minutes. It recharges your brain and makes you more focus-driven while working.



✔ You don't exercise.

Think about it. When was the last time you hit the gym? When did you last put on your trainer's shoes and jog around the neighborhood? If you cannot remember the last time you exercised, you're in for a decreased productivity at work.

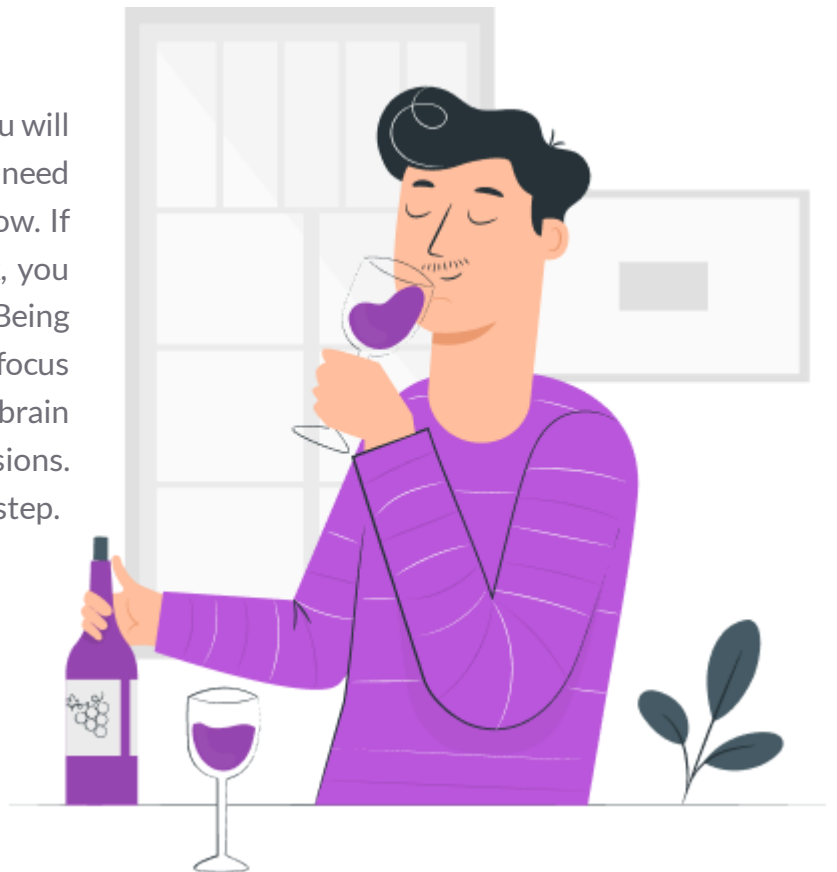


A study from the University of Illinois shows that adults who joined a cardiovascular fitness program are able to sharpen their focus. They have greater capabilities to ignore distractions while working, and as a result, they get the most out of their days. You can improve your focus, too, by hitting the gym and sweating a bit before heading to work. Exercising is not only good to help you stay fit. It is also good for your brain and helps you to focus on your work.

✔ You are drinking too much.

Having a wine or two occasionally is not bad. In fact, if it's something worth celebrating, you deserve to have some wine. However, if you open a bottle of wine or any alcohol each time you want to celebrate, or you are stressed, it will most likely lead to excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol use disorder happens when you drink too much that your body becomes so dependent on alcohol and recognizes it as a "necessity." It can affect your work performance and make it harder for you to concentrate on your work. Most people with this disorder continue to drink alcohol even if they know that it can strain their relationship with their loved ones, officemates, or employer.

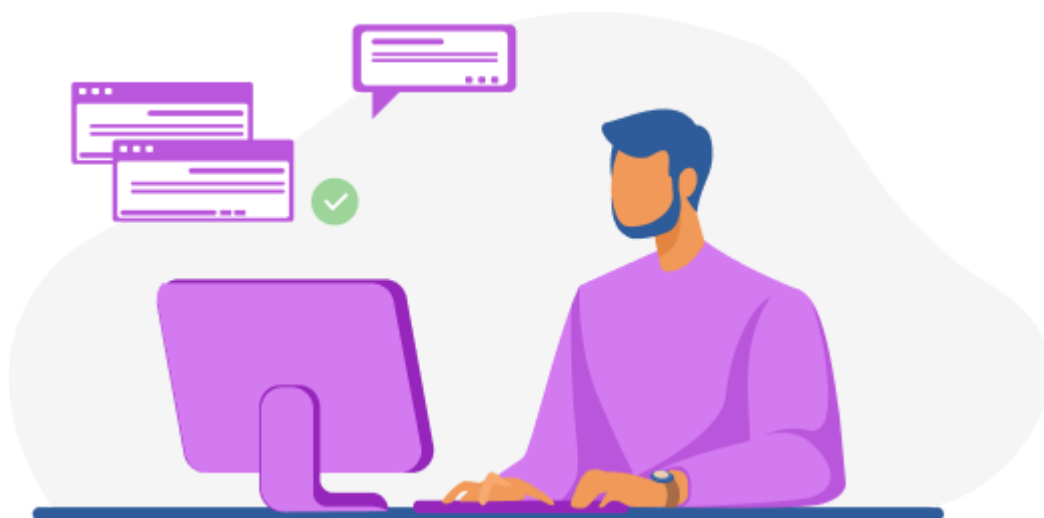
Being a heavy drinker is not something you will want to put on your resume. Hence, you need to stop your drinking habit as early as now. If you have more than 15 drinks per week, you are at a greater risk of being an alcoholic. Being sober helps you to concentrate more and focus on the work to do. Alcohol makes your brain fuzzy and unable to make proper decisions. Cutting down on your drinks is a starting step.



You can also visit your doctor to diagnose you and give you medicines that can help you control your drinking urges.

🏆 You overwork yourself.

Do you know that the United States is one of the leading countries when it comes to the highest number of working hours every year? An average citizen can work as twice as hard as a citizen residing in another country. Aside from that, the fact that the U.S. does not have mandated paid sick time, national paid parental leave, or mandated annual leave, it's getting harder to get out of work. Your subconscious mind tells you that you need to work until you drop. As a result, your ability to focus is greatly affected.



In this case, you need to take a break. Detach yourself from capitalist productivity for a while. Your brain needs to recharge. Even if you're going to lose a few dollars, it's still worth taking a real break away from work. Sit down and plan a short vacation you've always wanted for yourself.

Most employers have seen how actual breaks can increase the productivity of their workers and allow them to take leave whenever necessary. If you feel like you are working yourself to the bones, take a step back and rest. When you come back, your brain will be able to focus much better, allowing you to deliver improved working performance.

These are some of the reasons why your productivity isn't making any progress, and it's hard for you to focus. If you identify one of these factors, you can slowly build a habit to break it off and improve your performance at work. Speaking of habits, in order to harness the power of focus, one must develop focus-driven habits, which brings us to the next chapter. The ability to enter the state of deep focus is now within your reach.

Chapter 4

6 Habits Of Highly Focused Achievers



6 Habits Of Highly-Focused Achievers

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“Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow know what you truly want to become.”

Steve Jobs

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By now, you must have realized that focus is not a technique you execute to finish a certain task. It is a skill that you develop through constant practice and good habits.

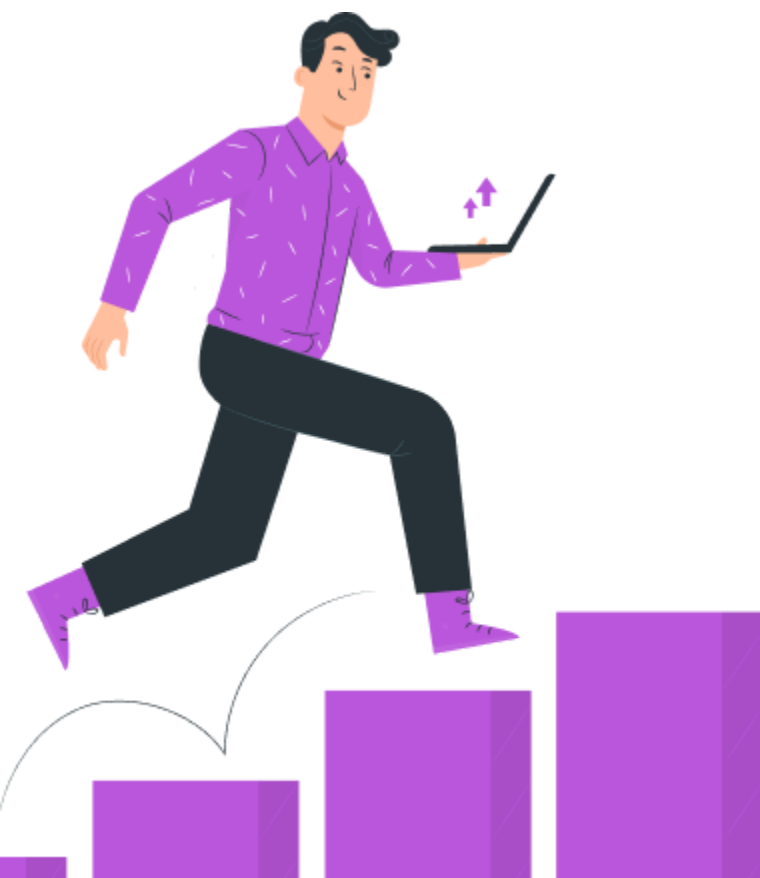
Most of the achievers and successful people in the world are highly-focused individuals. If not for their deep focus, they wouldn't be where they are right now. These individuals practice habits that allow them to enter a state of deep focus and get the job done.

Here are the following key habits that you need to develop if you want to become a highly-focused individual.

🔑 Highly-focused individuals love routines.

This may come off as boring to most people, but establishing a routine can get things done. It is one of the secret weapons of the leading achievers in the world. Take a look and observe someone who is in a state of deep focus. Unlike most people, they are not stressed or worried about completing the task. They are comfortable in their zone. It only verifies that focus is a skill you can characterize with ease than excessive effort.

Have you ever wonder how these great athletes, painters, musicians, and entrepreneurs make it look easy? It's because it's really easy and natural for them. It is not a product of frustrated effortfulness because these people are masters of routine.



For instance, going to work can be cognitively demanding. You just don't get up and go to work, expecting to boost your work performance abruptly. You need to build a routine that will prepare your mind and body to enter a state of deep focus. Some of the most successful businessmen have very simple routines before going to work. They shower, exercise, have a cup of coffee, meditate, and listen to music before they start working. It serves as their "warm-up" so that they are able to focus when they start work.



They procrastinate in a productive manner.

You may think that highly-focused people are also masters of avoiding procrastination. They're not. In fact, these achievers know that procrastination is normal and accept it wholeheartedly. Putting procrastination and productivity in the same sentence may seem conflicting, but it is actually a habit that you need to develop.



For instance, as an entrepreneur, you have a goal of finishing your business plan within the week. But then, procrastination strikes, and you are suddenly not in the mood to do your plan. Instead of lounging and watching movies on Netflix, you can spend your procrastination time reading articles and checking out successful business plans. It is beneficial for your goal and can even inspire you or give you an idea of what to present. It's an activity that you can enjoy and benefit from at the same time. Even though you have spent the entire morning avoiding work, you're still able to be productive.

However, it doesn't mean that you should tolerate procrastination all the time. You should only procrastinate in small ways so you don't end up avoiding major works in the near future.

Stop fighting and criticizing yourself for even thinking about procrastination. It is normal and something that you need to deal with. It's easier to procrastinate productively and get back to work, feeling more inspired and focused.

✔ They eliminate any trace of distraction.

Distraction is the biggest hindrance to focus on. Highly-focused people are ruthless when it comes to distraction. They wipe out the last trace of it so that nothing or no one can interrupt them while working.

Have you observed the working space of a highly-focused individual? It is most likely clutter-free, clean, with lots of natural light coming in, and breathable. It's the perfect working space to focus on what needs to be done and not be distracted by anything.

The first step is to believe that distractions are not inevitable. You can eliminate it. Right then and there.

For instance, if you need some serious work done before lunchtime, you need to prepare for it. Shut off your phone and leave it in your bag. No unrelated application must be running on your computer except what you need to use. If possible, you can also lock your working space so that no one can come and go, distracting you from what you are doing. That way, nothing can distract you as soon as you start working.





They don't rely on inspiration.

Getting inspired all the time is an illusion. Just think of it as extra credit. Whenever you are inspired, you can take advantage of it. But if you're not, believe in yourself that you can still do a good job.

Writers who release books and complete an entire series in just one season are not inspired every day. There are days when they feel gloomy but still believe that their drafts are worth publishing. This should be the mindset that you need to cultivate.

Most people claim that being uninspired is the cause of their lack of focus. Highly-focused people have a good relationship with inspiration, but they don't rely on it all the time. Even if the inspiration doesn't show up, they still do. And this is what makes them indomitable. Consistency is the key to your success.

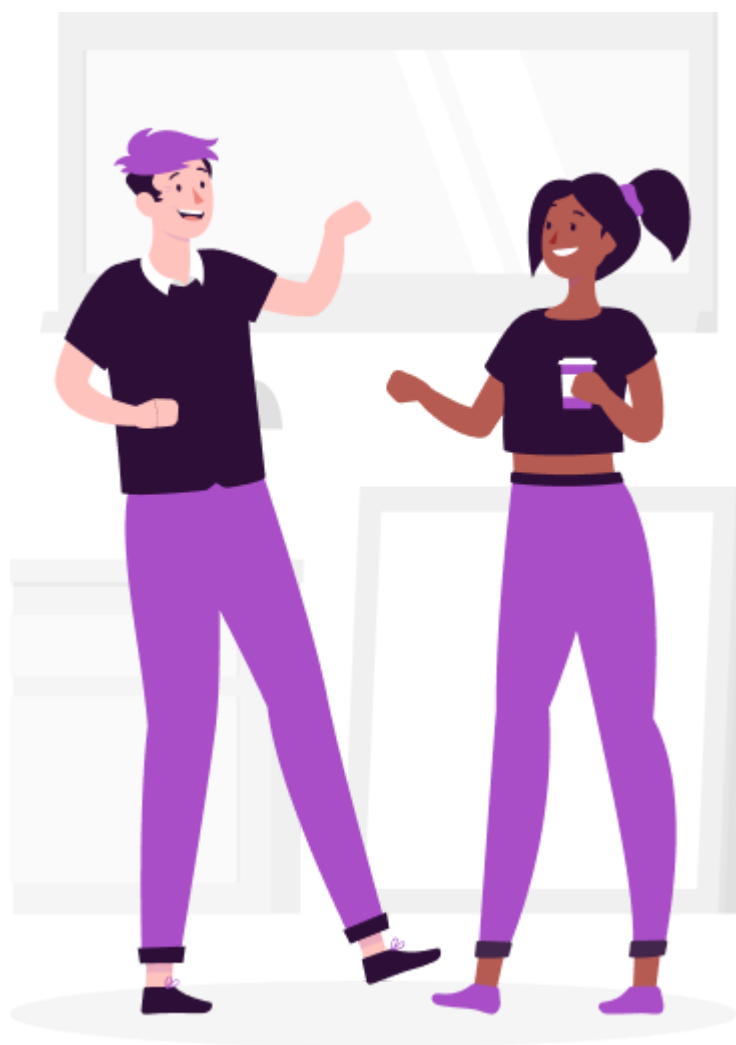




They have principles and values.

If you wish to develop improved focus, you need to have compelling principles and values. It's just you and yourself, after all. Even if you equip yourself with the best equipment or the best tips from leading experts, what will matter is the quality of your work.

Doing the right kind of work makes you focus effortlessly. For instance, having a good conversation with your friend is not something to sweat about. Or, playing a video game and leveling up to the next stage is not something you try so hard to do.



**There is the simple truth behind the entire concept of deep focus:
only work with things that you value the most.**

If you find it hard to focus on one thing, take a step back, and evaluate. Do you value this work? Is this something you are passionate about? Or is it something you are at least interested in? If not, you are just wasting your time and will probably come up with poor quality work, which will make you feel even worse.

Highly-focused people know which fields to dominate because they have identified their passions long before. Be clear about your principles and values. Do not settle for less, and do not waste your time trying to work on something you don't have an ounce of care of. If you truly love your work, you won't need to worry about focus so much. It would take care of itself.



Anything can be a habit if you continuously develop it for 21 days. Hence, for the next three weeks, dedicate your time to developing these habits that will lead you to be a highly-focused individual.

Chapter 5

5 Brain Foods to Improve Your Focus



5 Brain Foods to Improve Your Focus

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“Your diet is a bank account. Good food choices are good investments.”

Bethenny Frankel

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In this bonus chapter, we will talk about the top brain foods that can help improve your focus. Since it is a skill that you need to develop, incorporating it even into your diet can help you a lot.

Right now, take a look at your fridge and eliminate all the junk—soft drinks, chips, cake, and other unhealthy foods. It's time to prioritize your focus above anything else by eating the following brain foods:

Caffeine

Ever wonder why top executives can't almost live without their coffee? It's because caffeine can help you feel more alert. While it does not boost your IQ or make you smarter almost immediately, caffeine is a substance that will energize your body to do your work. It helps you to concentrate.

Caffeine is often found in coffee, energy drinks, and chocolate. However, it doesn't mean that the more you drink coffee, the more focused you will be. Drinking too much coffee can make you feel jittery and anxious. Consume in moderation.



✓ Blueberries

Numerous studies show that blueberries are effective in boosting your concentration for up to five hours. Blueberries contain antioxidants that can help your mind be fresh by regulating the flow of blood and oxygen.



These tasty berries are rich in anthocyanins, resveratrol, and proanthocyanidins, and tannins that are shown to improve focus and even fight cancer.

✔ Fatty Fish

Do you know that around 60% of your brain is made of fat? That fat is called omega-3. Hence, eating fatty fish such as sardines, salmon, and trout, is great for your brain. Providing your brain with omega-3s is crucial in learning because your brain uses it to produce nerve cells and brain cells. Besides that, numerous studies have shown that fatty fish can help to decline Alzheimer's diseases.



✔ Turmeric

Turmeric has been one of the biggest trends in the market today, and all for good reasons. This deep yellow spice is good for your brain and can help to improve focus. It contains antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties that can help improve your memory, help with depression, and promote the growth of new brain cells. You can turn your potato dishes into a healthier meal by adding turmeric and curry powder.

✓ Orange

Get your daily dose of vitamin C by peeling an orange and enjoying your break. According to a 2014 review article, foods that are rich in Vitamin C can help to prevent the decline of your brain and help you to combat Alzheimer's disease. It also helps by fighting free radicals that can cause damage to the brain. If you want a healthy brain as you age, then eating excellent amounts of vitamin C from oranges, tomatoes, and strawberries should become a habit.

These brain foods are proven and tested to help your brain in peak working conditions. When you have a healthy brain, it's easier for you to become a highly-focused individual and get your work done. These brain-boosting foods should be included in your diet plan from now on. Discipline yourself and eat clean. See the difference.



Conclusion

Congratulations on coming this far. Now you are ready to harness the power of focus with everything you have learned from this book. Focus is a skill that needs to be cultivated, not a technique that you can use to finish certain tasks. There are different reasons why you are not focused on it.

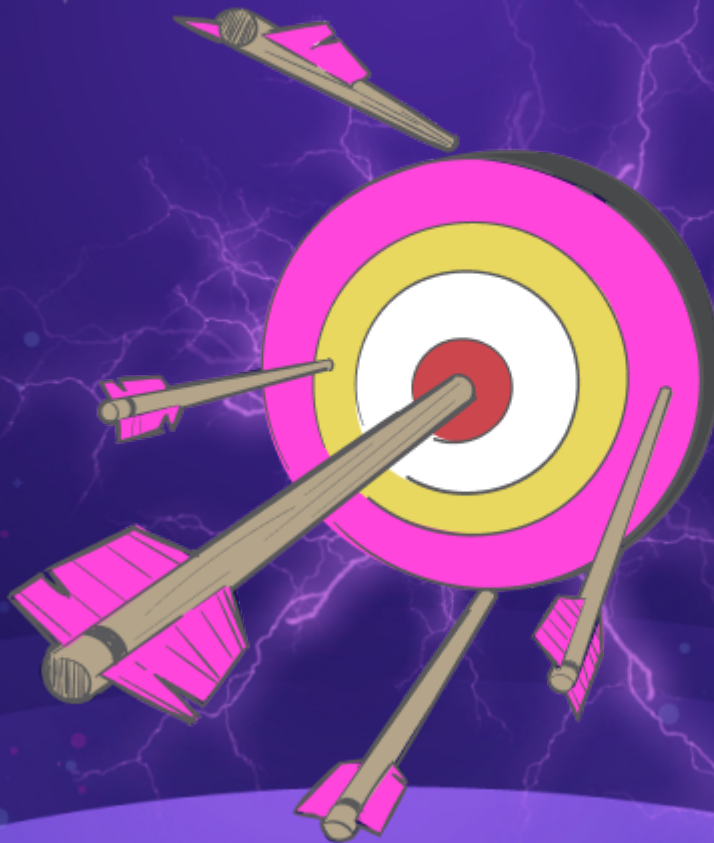
Most of these reasons are due to an unhealthy lifestyle. Some are warning signs of an underlying medical condition. Knowing these reasons can help you to identify the best way to get treated and improve your focus. Besides that, changing your lifestyle by developing good habits and eating brain foods can impact your focus positively.



Focus is the key to success. If you are focused on your goal, the rest of the world fades away, and it's only you and yourself. The most successful people in the world know the importance of focus. You could be one of them, too. Focusing on things that are valuable to you, exerting efforts day by day to improve your focus can lead you to a better place.

There is no better time to work on your state of deep focus than now. You could be the next great leader of your nation or the most successful businessman in your industry if you focus on it. Anything is possible when you are in a state of deep focus.

Thank You!



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