Focus & Attention Tools

Practical strategies to support focus, attention, and everyday well-being.



Western StudentExperience

STREAMS that Support Focus

Focus is influenced by many factors, including sleep, stress, emotions, our environment, physical wellbeing, and the task itself. Explore the strategies in each stream to see what supports your focus and attention.



SLEEP

- Prioritize a sleep schedule.
- Use your bed for sleep or sex and not for school work.
- Do something calming before bed, like reading a book, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, or mindful breathing (**no tech!**)

TIME



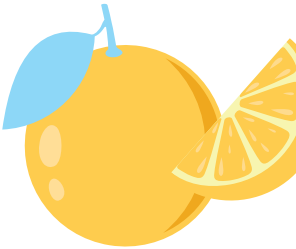
- Identify the time you have available and choose specific studying tasks. For example, read the first 25 pages of chapter one and complete the review questions.
- Decision fatigue happens! Having to make many decisions impacts your ability to make further decisions.
- Add in breaks so you're not overwhelmed. This includes movement breaks like stretching or walking to get a drink.

REALISTIC GOALS



- Be honest about all the things you need to do
- Set goals that are achievable within a specified time frame. For example, if you plan to work for 25 minutes, pick a task you can do in that time.
- Feeling successful early in the day will make you more likely to continue the actions that led to your success.

EATING



- Focus on eating throughout your day (whether that is snacks or meals) and try to plan out what you are eating.
- Choose high protein foods that support with focus; foods high in sugar have shown to increase inattention and behaviour dysregulation.

AREA

- Make your space comfortable and find what works best for you.

Do you need:

Background noise	Silence
People	No people
Sitting at a table	Sitting on the floor
Low light	Bright light

- Body doubling is completing a task with another person to help stay focused on studying. They can be in-person or virtual.
- Have a few study spots in mind so that you can change location when you don't feel productive.

MOVEMENT

- Aim for 30 minutes a day of any activity that raises your heart rate. The brain chemicals from exercise help regulate the attention system.
- Any form of movement helps, including walking, cardio classes, dancing, biking, swimming, or playing sports.



SCREEN TIME



- Gain control over your technology use as it negatively impacts attention. For example, try waiting 20 minutes after waking up before going on your phone.
- Find an offline (no tech) activity that you enjoy, like walking, crocheting, doing crafts, playing sports, or reading graphic novels.

Looking for more support? If you're experiencing ongoing challenges with focus or attention, support is available through Wellness & Well-Being.

Visit **uwo.ca/health** for more information.

Study Plan Sample

Describe the project/test/assignment

Write down exactly what you need to get done.

Task Breakdown	Time	What you need

Set reminders for yourself on your phone or in your calendar to keep on task, or schedule a time to study with a friend.

Looking for more support with your learning?

Learning Development & Success helps students build on their strengths and develop skills for academic success. They can support you with time management, studying, note-taking, motivation, and effective learning habits.

Not sure where to start? Complete the **Learning Skills Self-Assessment**.