Concentration

While Studying

-Think of concentration improvement as a 3-step process:

Step 1: Learn the causes of poor concentration and decide which apply to you.

Step 2: Understand what you can do to control them.

Step 3: Apply these controls and make your concentration habitual.

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| External Causes Of Poor  Concentration | What You Can Do To Control Them |
| TV/Stereo in the background  Too comfortable chairs  Food nearby  Friends and family nearby  Pets  Telephone | Leave or re-arrange a distracting environment  Go to a library or an empty classroom when you seriously intend to study  Train yourself to study away from others and in silence |

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| Internal Causes Of Poor  Concentration | What You Can Do To Control Them |
| Hunger  Drowsiness  Boredom, dislike, or disinterest  Anxiety about a class  Intimidating assignments  Daydreaming  Personal Worries | -Eat high-protein or fruit snacks and regular, balanced meals  -Plan to study when you are most alert  -Get adequate nighttime sleep  -Do 5 minutes of light exercise to wake up  -Find reasons for taking a class that satisfies you  -Join a study group  -Ask instructors about the relevance of the course or the material in their classes  -Visit with a campus counselor. They help students with these problems frequently  -Talk with students/instructors about the class  -Make sure you know how to study effectively  -Make sure your anxiety is about your studies and not something personal  -See a campus counselor  -Break up large assignments into smaller pieces and do a little each day  -Do the most intimidating part first  -Give yourself rewards for progress  -Work with one or more other students  -When your mind wanders, write down the interrupting thought and go back to studying  -Focus on spotting main ideas and details in textbooks and lecture notes -When you're ready to read again, do so--don’t try to read and daydream at the same time  -Make questions from main ideas using the details as answers  -Deliberately stop trying to study and daydream intentionally  -Identify and define the problem and develop a concrete, specific plan to resolve it  -Talk with someone who can help: a friend, relative, or college counselor |

You can make concentration a habit

Even if you lapse into old habits of distraction and daydreaming, keep expecting yourself to practice concentrating.

Use the controls above until you can routinely concentrate well on your studies for 50 minutes out of every hour.

***Adapted from: Study Skills Handouts by Dennis H. Congos, University of Central Florida***