

9 Smart Ways to Focus in the Age of Distraction



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Have you noticed just how easily you get distracted?

Do you go through life constantly frustrated with not getting much done of what you really want to do?

Do you feel the pain and regret of not being much productive in your work?

Nowadays, we are constantly getting bombarded with emails, Social Media notifications, phone calls, text messages and other distractions.

It's a wonder how anyone ever gets any quality work done!

It's crazy that very few people seem able to focus now on a single task.

“Single tasking is becoming a super power” – Tim Ferriss

It's madness how the whole world seems to be immersed in this frenzied chaos of the digital world and Social Media.

But there is hope for us all.

Recall just how focussed you were the time when you just had to get something done – perhaps the night before you were sitting an exam or a test.

Remember just how engrossed you were in the movie the last time you went to the cinema.

So you can do this. You can focus. And you can be totally present. When you choose to and when you are motivated enough to do so.

Simply being able to focus on a single task will dramatically change your life.

Get committed to create the ability to focus on a single task. You can then be ruthless and get rid of distractions

Here are 9 smart ways of fighting back in the age of distraction and remaining focussed:-

1. Get Clarity About your Task and Review What Needs to be Done

Get very clear about what you must get done and why – otherwise why even bother to do in in the first place?

- Before you start on any task or activity ask why you must get this done?
- What bigger purpose will this activity serve?
- How committed are you to this activity?
- Do you even need to do this activity?
- What must you do first?
- Create a MUST do list, rather than a to-do list

Once you know what needs to be done and why, then it's time to ruthlessly block out any distractions.



2. Plan and Review Each Activity

Plan your day at the start of each day – or better still the night before - and review what activities must be done and why.

Before starting on any key task take a step back and review what needs to be done and how you are going to do it.

- How long will it take?
- What else do you need in place?
- Who else needs to be involved?
- How will you do it?
- Can you break it up into smaller tasks?
- Which is the most important task that you must start first?

Taking a step back will allow you to get clarity about the activity and what resources you need to complete it - and you can then begin to block out any potential distractions.

3. Create your Optimum Environment

Your environment and your energy levels will either support you or distract you - so create a tranquil and minimalist work environment which helps you focus rather than distracting you.

The key is to simplify your physical space and to only keep what's absolutely necessary and vital for your work flow.

- Have little or no physical distractions in your workspace
- [Declutter and simplify](#) your space and indeed all areas of your life
- Choose to play some soothing music in the background if it helps you to focus – or even special music programs designed to help you focus, such as [Brain.FM](#)
- Put on a headset if you work in a noisy environment.
- Work in isolation or in a closed room if possible



4. Maintain High Energy

To continuously remain focussed and operate at high efficiency, you need optimal nutrition and hydration. So nourish yourself in the best way possible.

- Eat high energy and nutritious food only
- Drink ample amount of water
- Moderate your caffeine intake
- Work in focussed spells of 45 to 60 minutes
- Have a short 5 minute break after every 45 to 60 minutes – but do not look at your phone or Social Media sites during your break!
- Sit quietly for at least 15 minutes daily and make meditation a part of your daily routine
- Learn about mindfulness and start becoming more aware of what's really going on for you
- Limit and even eliminate the amount of time you watch television and online videos
- Get 7 hours of restful sleep every night

5. Master Your Phone Once and For All

The Smartphone has changed the way we work for ever – but has also brought into our lives the biggest distraction ever. Now it's time you became smarter than your smartphone!

- Keep it out of sight whilst working so any screen activity does not distract you, even momentarily
- Switch off all phone notifications and you can then choose when you look at your phone
- Do not always respond to incoming text messages there and then – nothing is ever really that urgent that it demands an instant reply
- Do not keep it by your bedside at night
- Keep it in another room overnight – and use some other alarm device to wake you up and not rely on your phone alarm to wake you up
- Delete superfluous apps and games - get rid of all apps and except the absolutely essential ones
- Exit most or all WhatsApp groups – most of them are superfluous to your key tasks
- Switch it off!



6. Ruthlessly Cut Down Your Time on Social Media

How did we even spend our time before the advent of Social Media!? When was the last time you actually hung out properly with your close friends? It's time to be ruthless with Social Media!

- Do not look at Social Media sites first thing in the morning!
- Switch off all Social Media notifications on your phone and computer
- Be ruthless and get off all Social Media sites that do not really serve your bigger purpose.
- Go one step further and get off all Social Media sites – just stay on one or maximum two if you must
- If you must stay on Social Media, then install a site blocker program such as [Freedom](#) to block access to these sites for a designated time
- Do not endlessly post on Social Media sites.
- Be ruthless and unfriend all but your true friends from Facebook
- Before sharing anything on Social Media, ask WHY!?
- Only post anything that's in line with your values and your mission
- Do not comment on posts
- Do not engage in debate
- Eliminate mindless surfing



7. Master your Emails

Have you ever started going through your emails first thing in the morning and then noticed that a few hours had just flown by and you hadn't even started on your main activity?

- Do not start your work day by checking your emails.
- Set up a time in your day when you can check your emails – just not first thing in the morning.
- Unsubscribe from all mailing lists that do not serve you.
- Look at your emails only 2/3 times a day if your role allows that
- Only send out replies to emails if necessary
- Avoid email merry-go-around – just call that person to discuss the matter

8. Create Boundaries with All the People in Your Life

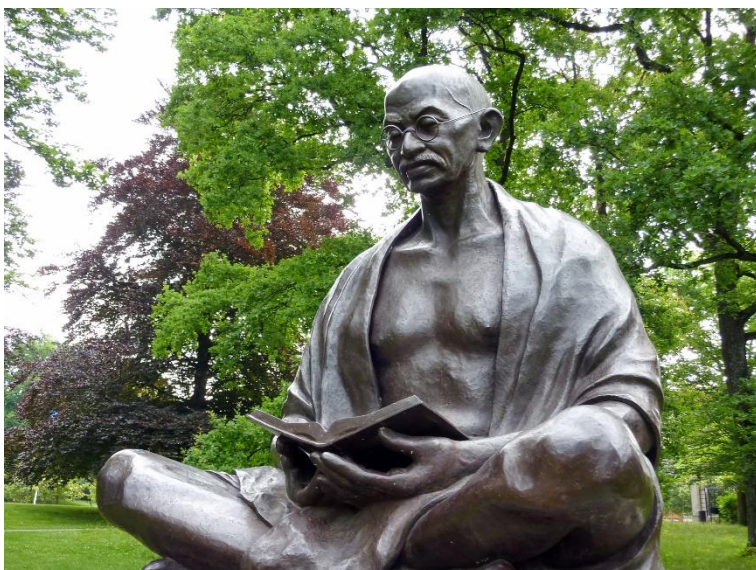
People can be your biggest distraction – but only if you let them be.

- Establish clear boundaries and let others know when you are simply not contactable – and when you are available for them
- Let people know politely but firmly when they can intrude whilst you are focused on an activity
- Do not take personal calls during your work time
- Have fewer Social Media “friends”
- Ensure that the few Social Media friends you keep do not intrude on your time and energy
- Minimise or even eliminate social time whilst you are focused on the task at hand
- Do not allow others to suck you into their agenda
- If someone wants a chunk of your time, then ask why? How would it fit into your goals?
- Learn to just say NO!

9. Form Powerful Habits and Routines

At the end of the day, the ability to focus comes down to one thing – forming powerful habits and routines. Now it's time to apply and integrate all the simple ideas above – and also the habits below which will transform your life if you truly focus and make them a part of your life:-

- Simplify all areas of your life
- Be very alert and conscious of existing and potential distractions
- Establish a night-time daily routine - wake up earlier and go to sleep at a regular time
- Cultivate a self-care regime which allows you to perform at your best
- Always endeavour to do your best, knowing that you become great incrementally
- Make it an ongoing quest to search out and apply smart productivity hacks
- Persevere with new smart habits till they become second nature
- Cultivate an unstoppable mind-set
- Take time to reflect and review



The Smart Way Forward

Ultimately it all comes down to YOU and just how committed and determined you are to focus and get things done.

- Get clear about why you just have to do something, plan it out and know what it's going to take from you to do it.
- Start with a massive digital detox and you may just surprise yourself just how little value Social Media adds to your life currently.
- Set up clear and defined boundaries with those key people that matter to you and who are involved in your goal, and let go of the rest.
- Create your ideal environment, energise yourself and take the tiniest next step towards the completion of your goal.

You CAN focus and do a single task only at any time you choose to do so.

You CAN stop being frustrated at not being productive.

You CAN once again be super-productive.

And do remember to celebrate and reward yourself after you have accomplished your task. You know it makes sense to celebrate – just don't be distracted from having some fun!

