

How to avoid getting DISTRACTED WHILE STUDYING

AZNEEF CHOWDHURY

Let's face it, studying feels like a chore for most of us, and we'd all like to avoid it if there weren't any consequences. Yet, when exam season rolls around, we students must find a way to keep ourselves focused and attentive at the study table.

Here are a few things you can do to avoid getting distracted while studying.

Using a Pomodoro Timer

The Pomodoro Technique breaks up your study time into 25-minute segments, with five-minute intervals in between. It creates a psychological barrier to prevent you from getting distracted. Every time you turn on the timer, you essentially promise yourself to not do anything to break your flow for 25 minutes. After you're done, you reap the rewards of staying diligent by utilising that five-minute break for whatever you want. There are plenty of different versions of this simple yet effective technique, and apps are available to keep track of your time.

Disabling your social media

Taking a break from your socials is one of the most effective ways to keep yourself on track. When your social media is disabled, it keeps your brain from constantly craving that dopamine hit derived from social media and allows you to think about things other than what your friends are doing. I usually recommend you do this for a few weeks before your big exams and then re-enable your social media once they're over.

Listening to music

For some people, music can drown out distracting elements in your study environment and allow you to focus on the task at hand. It can also help boost your working memory and enhance your brain's cognitive tasks. Lo-fi music is a genre specifically made for this purpose.

Getting adequate rest

It might seem tempting to forgo some rest time and get some work in, but working when you're tired makes it harder for you to hold your focus and hampers your concentration and ability to reason logically. Ultimately, you end up failing to pay attention to your study for an extended period and get distracted, and your productivity plummets. Thus, you must be well-rested before starting a study session. A short 10-minute power nap usually does the trick for most people.

Meditation

Sometimes, the elements distracting our study sessions aren't around us, but rather inside. A scurry of thoughts raging inside the depths of our minds can interrupt our flow of study and ultimately keep us distracted. Regular meditation can keep your mind calm and reduce your stress levels, allowing you to give your best whilst studying.

References:

1. The Daily Star (March 1, 2023) *Can lo-fi music actually help you study?*
2. Columbia School of Professional Studies (May 10, 2021) *How Meditation Can Help You Focus*



ILLUSTRATION: FAISAL BIN IQBAL



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

THE BENEFITS OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK

RUBAMA AMREEN

Self-talk is the inner dialogue which constantly makes subconscious observations about our surroundings. It often reflects the recurring ideas, beliefs and biases of the subconscious mind. A lot of the time, these thoughts can be quite negative and destructive, which can result in one undermining their confidence and leaving themselves demotivated.

Therefore, it is important to consciously practise positive self-talk throughout the day. This does not necessarily mean to maintain an optimistic demeanour all the time. Occasionally changing one's perspective of things can also do the trick.

Breaking out of the cycle of constantly berating oneself for one's faults can be difficult. Identifying the negative thoughts and either replacing them or challenging them can be effective, or one could simply stop thinking for a while, and divert one's train of thought to another topic to distract themselves. Cynical comments about oneself are mostly just the exaggerated truth.

Speaking to oneself out loud can also be beneficial. After a tiring, cumbersome day, muttering a few words of encouragement to oneself in the mirror can provide us with a boost of self-esteem.

Instead of telling oneself "This is too difficult", they could instead opt for "I'll try my best". Small changes can cause a significant shift in one's mindset. The process could take some time as breaking out of an old habit is difficult.

Speaking to oneself out loud can also be beneficial. After a tiring, cumbersome day, muttering a few words of encouragement to oneself in the mirror can provide us with a boost of self-esteem. It should be noted that how one addresses oneself also affects their emotions – using second-person pronouns such as "you" or one's own name can ultimately yield better results.

Positive self-talk has many benefits to physical, mental, and emotional health. It helps regulate one's feelings and behaviour and can be used as a stress-management tool. It can also help an individual develop healthier coping mechanisms for tense or traumatic situations and enhance social skills.

References:

- Positive Self-Talk: How Talking To Yourself Is A Good Thing* (June 27, 2020). Healthline.
What is positive self-talk? (March 18, 2022) Medical News Today.

Rubama Amreen is a student of Maple Leaf International School.