

FOCUS

CHECKLIST



CHECKLIST

- **Science of how to stay focused**

- Your brain is always on
- Your brain must choose what to pay attention to
 - You are not always in control of what your brain focuses on
- Two types of focus
 - Top-down focus
 - Goal oriented
 - Ex: studying for an exam
 - Bottom-up focus
 - Stimulus driven
 - Can disrupt top-down focus even when you are trying to stay concentrated on a certain goal
 - Ex: when your phone beeps and you look down at it
- Work with your brain's natural focus schedule
 - Take breaks
 - Don't multitask
 - Practice mindfulness

- **Stay motivated from the beginning**

- Commit to focus from the beginning so you're more likely to not get distracted
- Pareto principle
 - 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes
 - Unequal relationship between inputs and outputs
 - Focus on the 20% to change the majority of the outcomes
- How to set goals and objectives
 - Goals can hold you accountable and help you stay motivated from the beginning
 - SMART goals
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound
 - Set daily goals according to need
 - Write goals and objectives down where you can see them later
 - Use your goals as a way to keep yourself motivated

- **Create a focus haven**

- Your work environment needs to help you focus
 - A distracted area leads to distracted work
 - A focused, organized, or quiet area leads to focused work
- Features of a focus haven
 - No distractions
 - Minimal sounds
 - Except classic or other wordless music
 - Devices turned off
 - Door shut (if applicable)
 - Organized shelves and desk
 - Adequate lighting
 - Goals placed somewhere visible

- **Do not let devices be a distraction**

- How to manage tools for focus
 - Use “Do Not Disturb” mode
 - Use website or app blocking applications on your phone or computer during work hours
 - Only use devices that aid focus
 - Work-necessary devices
 - Timers
 - Noise-cancelling headphones
- Digital minimalism
 - Try to use as few devices as possible
 - Switch out your device for another application
 - Ex: switch your phone alarm for a physical timer

- **Take control of your time**

- You are in control of your own time
 - If you do not recognize this fact, you will not be able to manage your time
 - Learn what time management techniques work for you
- Pomodoro technique
 - Time management technique
 - Decide on a task to work on
 - Put on timer for 25 minutes
 - Work for 25 minutes
 - Rest for 5 minutes after the 25 minutes are up
 - Repeat three more times
 - After the fourth 25-minute working interval, rest for 15-30 minutes
 - Start over
- “Eat the frog”
 - Start with the tasks you are most dreading
 - Prevents procrastination
 - Gets it out of the way
 - Will make the rest of your day go smoother

- **Single-task**

- Multitasking is not possible
 - Our brains can only do one thing at once
 - With the exception of autopilot tasks like listening to music
 - Most people “serial” task, not multitask
 - When they jump from task to task quickly
 - Will break focus and take more time to finish your work
- Single-tasking involves doing one task at a time
 - Decide on one task to do
 - Complete task all the way through
 - Do not move on to another task until you finish the first one

- **Take breaks**

- Breaks are necessary to stay focused
- Our brains can only work for one hour at a time
- Schedule breaks throughout your work day
 - Take breaks at least every hour
 - Use the pomodoro technique
 - Build concentration
 - Start with 25-minute work intervals and increase the time as your concentration improves

- **Fuel up**

- What you put in your body impacts your ability to focus
- Food
 - Eat complex carbohydrates, fats, and proteins
 - Fruits
 - Veggies
 - Nuts
 - Meat
 - Grains
 - Avoid processed or sugary foods
 - Eating right helps you stay full longer
- Drink water
 - Brains need water to focus
 - Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day
 - Increase amount if you workout

- **Turn actions into habits**

- Long term success is made through habits
- Turn single actions into habits
- Make a decision everyday to be focused and fight distraction