

Chapter 3

Reclaiming your time



S1: In this video, we'll learn about reclaiming your time

In many cases, these distractions may not seem as obvious as one imagines but may make you feel scattered or fuzzy instead. The result is that you may end up blaming yourself for not having more control.

S2: Now that you know that distraction is the main reason we lose focus, let us talk a bit about the various forms distractions can take. **In many cases, these distractions may not seem as obvious as one imagines but may make you feel scattered or fuzzy instead. The result is that you may end up blaming yourself for not having more control.**

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S3: At this point it is important to remember that as we get older, both focus and concentration can change, just as so can memory and other cognitive functions. However, this does not have to be inevitable. On the contrary, certain studies with older individuals reveal that the capacity for strategic learning or decision making may even improve with age.

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- Most are everyday habits that that be changed with some effort and may become the starting point for you to move ahead with gaining better focus and concentration

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Poor Diet And Nutrition

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- Why this happens is because everything we eat is converted by the body into glucose providing energy

S5: Food has a direct impact on cognition which is why a poor decision at lunch can derail an entire afternoon. Why this happens is because everything we eat is converted by the body into glucose providing energy. But not every type of food is processed by the body at the same rate.

- So a poor diet that leads to hunger and dehydration can become a major distraction
- Hunger can have a myriad of negative effects on health and behavior including the ability to focus
- It is often tied in to low blood sugar that directly leads to fatigue and low energy levels

S6: So a poor diet that leads to hunger and dehydration can become a major distraction. Hunger can have a myriad of negative effects on health and behavior including the ability to focus. It is often tied in to low blood sugar that directly leads to fatigue and low energy levels.

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S7: Dehydration, on the other hand can lead to numerous symptoms that can reduce focus including headaches, fatigue and low mood. Studies establish that even 1% lower than optimal hydration can bring about a lack of focus.

Some Of The Pitfalls You Need To Avoid:

- Weight loss diets
- Processed foods
- Junk foods



S8: So what are some of the pitfalls you need to avoid to let hunger and dehydration from setting in? Here's a look:

- **Weight loss diets**

Weight loss diets are notoriously bad for focus and concentration. Among these low fat diets can be held accountable as the brain needs essential fatty acids for proper functioning and these fats deprive the body of such nutrients. At the same time, cutting out on important nutrients like proteins is bad as well. This is because the amino acids in protein are essential for optimal brain performance in creating brain chemicals that improve focus.

- **Processed foods**

Poor nutrition, often in the form of empty calories does not give you the energy that you need. With insufficient energy, the brain has a hard time functioning or focusing on anything properly. As a result you may find that you experience mild irritability when you eat processed foods.

An example; eating processed foods such as cured meats can make the brain foggy. When you consume salt and protein rich foods like these there is a tendency to become dehydrated, and dehydration can diminish cognitive function.

- **Junk foods**

Junk foods are a whole different story by itself. Junk foods come in a high-fat, high-sugar and high-calorie package that gets digested fairly quickly. And while you may get instant gratification from eating these foods, they really don't do much to satisfy hunger.

Instead, since junk foods are devoid of nutrients, the body gets forced to engage sugar as a source of energy. This form of energy is quickly spent given the refined nature of sugar, leaving you with a sugar high also experienced as a temporary sensation of energy.

But after the metabolism has used up all the available energy, the surge is followed by a sugar crash accompanied by a feeling of fatigue, lethargy, focus loss and a wandering brain.

Hormones At Play

- Maintaining hormonal equilibrium is key to optimal brain functioning
- It may surprise you to know that a deficiency of specific hormones can bring about significant changes in mental focus and processing

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Maintaining hormonal equilibrium is key to optimal brain functioning. It may surprise you to know that a deficiency of specific hormones can bring about significant changes in mental focus and processing.

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S10: With hormones out of whack you may find yourself having difficulty remembering people's names, snapping unintentionally, suffering from mood swings or even start to feel depressed. All these and other factors play a part in affecting the way your brain functions.

- For women, the one thing to watch out for is estrogen levels
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S11: For women, the one thing to watch out for is estrogen levels. This female hormone can dictate everything from sugar cravings and bouts of fatigue to mood swings. Any imbalance is then seen as impacting mental agility where low estrogen levels can impair mental functions like memory, reasoning and even mood from running smoothly.

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Another consideration that falls under hormonal imbalances and one that can impact the ability to focus is hypothyroidism. Low thyroid issues have been directly linked with causing mental fog, concentration issues, depression and even short term memory loss.

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S13: It is important that an optimal balance of estrogen, progesterone and testosterone is maintained since all three hormones act directly on nerve cells in the brain. Collectively, these hormones can help facilitate neurotransmission, protect cells from neurotoxins and improve blood flow in the brain. Any imbalance and the result could be a significant drop in cognition, mental focus and the ability to sustain concentration.

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S14: This common issue does not get the true attention it deserves. Even with a single night of insufficient sleep, the mind suffers greatly and focus becomes compromised. When you don't sleep well, your thought processes slow down and you become less alert. This affects your ability to concentrate and can make the mind confused enough to prevent you from performing tasks that require complex thought.

- Also, feeling sleepy can cut into your working memory which is an important component of focusing
- The sensation makes you less vigilant and reduces the speed and accuracy of mental tasks



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- While memory and cognitive functioning gradually diminish with age, people with persistent or higher levels of stress are especially vulnerable
- The negative effects of stress on memory can cause the brain to freeze and completely lose track of focus

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While memory and cognitive functioning gradually diminish with age, people with persistent or higher levels of stress are especially vulnerable. The negative effects of stress on memory can cause the brain to freeze and completely lose track of focus. This can happen in any scenario from students studying for an exam to introducing a friend and forgetting their name mid-way through introductions.

- Focus caves in to stress in these situations as thinking gets so preoccupied with stress-inducing stimuli that other thoughts fail to emerge
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Lack Of Physical Activity

- Regular exercise releases brain chemicals which are key for memory and a lack of the same can impact focus and concentration
- As such 30 minutes of exercise can help make more BDNF

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Regular exercise releases brain chemicals which are key for memory and a lack of the same can impact focus and concentration. Exercise stimulates areas of the brain which are involved in memory functions. Physical activity releases a chemical called BDNF or brain derived neuro trophic factor which rewires memory circuits so they work better.

As such 30 minutes of exercise can help make more BDNF. But doing so once a week won't help.

Exercise needs to be made a regular part of daily routine to reap cognitive benefits



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Surrounding Environment

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Even though they may seem trivial, these environmental variables can play an important role in making or breaking focus.

Quality Of Information

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