

# Focusing on Concentration

**Analogy:** Attention is like an ocean wave; it rises and falls on its own.

**Consequence:** You will never stop daydreaming or becoming distracted.

**Goal:** to become better at re-focusing your attention when it sways.

**In other words:** to concentrate, not pay attention.

## Elements of concentration

As we go through the elements of concentration, you will notice that many strategies involve self-reflection. The [AA&CC's Daily Task Planner & Journal](#)

- tasks require more concentration effort when they are new, complex, boring, hard, or long; and when they involve learning/knowledge acquisition or stimuli of poor perceptual quality, such as text written in small font.
  - tasks require less concentration effort when they are familiar, simple, interesting, easy, or short; and when they involve knowledge application or transferring material between documents.
- Think: What, if anything, could you change about the task so that it requires less concentration effort?
  - Review your notes before class and preview upcoming lecture content
    - When you take breaks from working on an unfinished task, summarize your current progress/goals on a sticky note. That way, you can remember where you left off when you return to the project.
  - Choose which tasks to do based on your current priorities and interest level
  - Chunk the task into smaller bits so you can focus on one bit at a time
    - The [UTSC Assignment Calculator](#) can help you with this
      - To learn more about task chunking, you might also want to watch the videos “[Timeboxing: Elon Musk’s Time Management Method](#)” by Thomas Frank, or “[To Do Big Things, Take on Microprojects](#)” by The Art of Improvement.
  - Create variation in your study sessions. For example, you might...
    - arbitrarily pick one task to work on by entering the names of all your tasks into a randomizer like the [Random Name Picker](#) on Gigacalculator
    - take notes in different colours
    - periodically switch study locations
    - interleave your subjects. You can learn more about interleaving by watching the video “[Study Strategies: Interleaving](#)” by The Learning Scientists
  - Use a pencil to guide your gaze while reading so your eyes do not have to work as hard

## You

- Maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle
  - o To learn about the consequences of sleep deprivation on focus capacity, watch the video "[How Sleep Affects Your Brain](#)" by Dana Foundation
  - o Explore the Centre for Clinical Interventions website, which publishes free self-help that you can use for your mental and emotional wellbeing
- Schedule time to address recurring personal concerns
- Learn to recognize when you are losing focus
  
- Before beginning a task, assess your current concentration abilities and use that insight to guide your study goal

[Focus Quest - Stay Focused, Study Timer, Focus App](#)

- The [Engross](#) app will track the progress of your focusing
- Many of the aforementioned apps will also block other apps and/or websites that distract you!
- These apps turn meditation into a game:
  - [Loner](#) ○ [Meditation Game](#)
  - [Infinity Loop](#)

