

# CONCENTRATION

Are you able to stay focused in class? Or do you get distracted easily? Every student has his own **ability to concentrate**. This means how long you can keep your attention to one task without being distracted. That's why a good attention span is **important during your studies**. It is influenced by **multiple factors**. Consequently, your concentration depends on the situation you are in and can change over time.



## DISTRACTORS:

- Internal: hunger, thirst, pain, stress, overthinking, fatigue, ...
- External: all things in your surroundings that can distract you, for example: noise, messy desk, people, animals, social media, mobile phone, laptop, to-do list, activities, ...



## INTEREST:

You've probably already noticed: it's easier to be focused on activities that you are interested in. Motivation and concentration go hand in hand! Not every task will be as interesting and thus as motivating to you. Know your pitfalls and apply the tips below, especially when tackling the less interesting tasks!



## RHYTHM & ROUTINE:

Do you study better in the morning or in the evening? Keep your biological rhythm into account. By establishing a daily routine, it will cost less energy to follow your planning over time. Take enough breaks on a regular basis in between studying.



## STUDY METHOD:

When you read a text or listen to the professor in a passive way, it's easy for your attention to slip away. Try to process your subject material actively by taking notes, making a schedule, structuring the course, finding connections, testing yourself with sample questions, telling the text in your own words, ... This way, it will be easier to remember the subject material and also to stay focused.

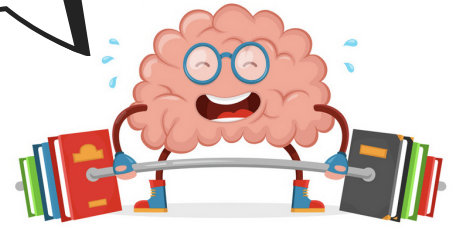
# CONCENTRATION CHECKLIST

## INTERNAL DISTRACTORS

- ✓ **Not hungry nor a full stomach?**  
A healthy and balanced diet is important.
- ✓ **Do you drink plenty of water?**  
Limit caffeine intake (energy drinks, coffee, cola, tea, chocolate).
- ✓ **Do you exercise regularly?**  
Go outside during breaks and get some fresh air.
- ✓ **Healthy sleep pattern?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Sleep](#).
- ✓ **Feeling good?**  
Going through something? Talk about it!
- ✓ **Not too much stress?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Stress & Infographic Abdominal Breathing](#).
- ✓ **Thoughts under control?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Overthinking](#).

**Train your brain!**

*Your concentration is like a muscle that you can train!*



## EXTERNAL DISTRACTORS

- ✓ **Good study space?**  
Do you prefer studying alone or with others; at home or in the library; with music or earplugs?
- ✓ **Distractors eliminated?**  
Tidy your desk, block apps/websites, turn notifications off, put your laptop in a different room, ...

## RHYTHM AND ROUTINE

- ✓ **What's your biorhythm?**  
Start every day at the same time and plan enough breaks. You can't be fully focused during the whole day.
- ✓ **Good study structure?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Pomodoro Technique](#).
- ✓ **Achievable planning?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Planning](#).

## STUDY METHOD

- ✓ **Do you study actively?**  
More tips on this: [Infographic Active and strategic studying](#).
- ✓ **Do you reward yourself?**  
What can give you an extra boost to study? (A yummy snack, going for a walk, playing with the dog, ...)
- ✓ **Specific goals?**  
Set small and specific goals.

### Self-reflection:

Every person is unique. What factors influence your ability to concentrate? Take some time to reflect! When can you keep your focus better? Why? Where are you? What are you doing? What distracts you? What goes well? What does not go well?

## Need extra help? Study Guidances takes care of you!

You can find all info about what support we offer on our website: [student.vub.be](http://student.vub.be). Don't know who you can go to with your question? Drop by at our Contact Point or give us a call on [02 629 23 06](tel:+3226292306). You can also reach us by mail: [begeleiding@vub.be](mailto:begeleiding@vub.be).