

Best Ways to Boost Your Focus on Demand



Some people are doing it. As crazy as it sounds, they're videotaping themselves in the office for a day to see how much time they waste. And what those that have dared to take on this little experiment have found is pretty staggering. Between, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, checking fantasy football scores, email and cell phones, there's a lot of time that is just flat out wasted during the day. It shouldn't come as much of a surprise either. But, in a time when demands in the workplace are at an all-time high, doesn't it reason that you should be as productive as you can?

At the end of the day it all comes down to your ability to focus. So, how do you focus on demand? We've got a couple ideas.

Take a Break

Yep, that's right. Countless studies have proven that taking frequent short breaks is essential for maximizing your productivity. In fact, people that take a five-minute break every hour to leave the office, take a short walk and get away from their desk entirely are much more productive than those that are seated behind a computer screen for hours on end. Try scheduling purposeful breaks throughout the day. You'll find that your ability to focus on a singular task and get things done increases immediately.

No More Multitasking

It happens dozens of times per day. You're working on something and the new email alert shows up in the bottom right corner of your computer screen. You see it, click on it, and before you know it, you're embroiled in responding and have totally lost track of what you were working on before. When you finally return to the task at hand, that email is still on your mind and you have to backtrack to figure out where you left off. Talk about wasted time.

Try time blocking. If you purposefully set time aside for certain tasks each day and stick to it, you'll be shocked at how well you're able to maintain focus and get things done.

Music Anyone?

Maybe it's not for everyone and we're certainly not talking about having the latest Katy Perry single on repeat. But if you find yourself struggling to maintain your focus, you might want to experiment with have some soothing classical or piano music playing in the background while you work. Studies have shown this to be an effective strategy to stay on task.

Get Rid of Clutter

There's nothing worse than coming into the office in the morning and not being able to see your desk. Quality reports on top of company memos buried under those thank you notes you forgot to send yesterday. By the time you've cleaned up the mess, 30 minutes have gone by and you're still not sure where you left off.

If you make a point to stay organized and clean your desk off before you leave every day, you'll be able to get off to a fast start the following morning and maintain that momentum throughout the day.

Breathe

Think about how your body reacts when you're stressed or under the gun. Do you tense up? Does your breath become shallow? Of course, that's the natural reaction when you're uncomfortable. Your mind is racing with 1,000 different

thoughts and your ability to focus becomes greatly diminished. Even though it seems counterintuitive, this is when you should actually slow things down and take some [conscious deep breaths](#). Doing so helps you stay in the present and allows your mind to more clearly process everything that's going on.

The Power of a Nap

It's not likely that it will be possible every day, but if you can carve out 10-30 minutes for a power nap in the early afternoon, it can make all the difference between being worthless the rest of the day and feeling recharged. The body and mind have an amazing ability to bounce back quickly, they just need a little time.

Exercise

We're not talking about doing an entire workout in the gym. But, if you've been sitting behind your desk all morning, your blood circulation slows and it's easy to become tired. If you start feeling lethargic or your mind starts to wander, take a couple minutes to do jumping jacks, go on a walk or any other kind of [quick physical activity](#). Before you know it, you'll feel refreshed and awake.

Ok, you don't have to go to the extreme of filming yourself in the office to conjure up some ways to boost your focus and see just how much time you're wasting throughout the day. Instead, be conscious of distractions like email, your phone and social media. There's nothing wrong with taking mental breaks to indulge these habits, you just don't want to let them get in the way of your productivity. If you implement some of the strategies above when you're feeling tired or distracted, you'll be amazed by just how much more you can get done between 9:00 and 5:00.

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