

Chapter Three Tip Sheet: Focus Your Attention

How do I concentrate while I'm working on key tasks?

1. Explore the possibility of telecommuting if you can't escape the distractions in your office.
2. Don't allow people to hold conversations outside your cubicle or office door. Politely but firmly shoo them away so you can get your work done, and don't worry about what they think.
3. Stop multitasking. It just dilutes your attention and fools you into thinking you're productive, when you're really just busy.
4. If you break down a large task into subtasks in order to overcome procrastination, make sure you set deadlines and internal milestones for each of the subtasks, and track them carefully.
5. Rather than let perfectionism paralyze you, get to work and figure out the details as you go along.
6. If you ever find yourself thinking you can't possibly accomplish a task, challenge that negative self-talk instantly with the facts.
7. Turn off your electronic devices before you attend client meetings. It's too easy to let electronics distract you when you absolutely need to focus on face time.
8. If you don't already have a voice recorder app on your smartphone, get one so you can capture ideas as they occur to you.
9. When working, listen only to music you're thoroughly familiar with. Otherwise, you'll focus too much on the music and not your work.
10. You needn't become a social pariah just because you'd rather work than socialize. Consider arranging social outings outside of work hours so you can stay in touch with your coworkers.