

THE DEEP WORK STARTER KIT

Rebuilding Attention in a Distracted College World

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Learning Outcomes

- Understand the concept of cognitive fragmentation and its effects
- Recognize personal attention levels and learning habits
- Create strategies to sustain focus during study sessions

What is DEEP WORK?

- A focus, distraction-free time
- Staying on one task long enough to understand, remember and complete it.
 - “Lock-in mode”: one task, full attention, zero noise

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Learning improves when attention is **sustained**, not split
- Reduces mental fatigue and burnout
- Leads to higher-quality work (reading, writing, comprehension)
- **Quality of focus > hours spent studying**

WHY DOES OUR FOCUS BREAK DOWN?

COMMON SIGNS of COGNITIVE FRAGMENTATION

- **Jumping** between tabs, apps, and tasks
- **Rereading** the same paragraph without understanding
- **Feeling** mentally scattered or overwhelmed, "brain fog"
- Strong urges to "just check" your phone

IDENTIFY YOUR SOURCES OF DISTRACTIONS

- Which apps interrupt me most and why?
- When do I find myself having the urge to check my notifications?
- Did you look at your phone “just to check one thing” and resurfaced 15 minutes later?
- What tasks require the most focus for me?
- Am I switching between assignments mid- study session?
- Did I start my study session without a clear plan?
- Are my surroundings noisy?
- Am I studying in a place that I tend to use for relaxing and wind down?

INTRODUCE YOU TO THE DEEP WORK CHECKLIST

So, what is a Deep Work Checklist ?

- A practical tool to use **before you start studying**
- Helps reduce distractions **before they happen**
- Supports focused work through **intention, not willpower**

BUILD YOUR DEEP WORK RITUAL / CHECKLIST

1. My Focus Block

How long will this deep work session be?

- 20 minutes – I'm rebuilding focus
- 40 minutes – I can stay with one task
- 60 minutes – I already have strong focus habits
- () minutes

Why I chose this length:

Start time: _____

End time: _____

BUILD YOUR DEEP WORK RITUAL/ CHECKLIST

2. My Deep Work Zone

- **Where will I do this work?**

Location: _____

What makes this place work for focus?

BUILD YOUR DEEP WORK RITUAL/ CHECKLIST

3. Environment Check

Before I start, I will:

- Clear my desk/workspace
- Gather all materials I need
- Close extra tabs (limit: ____ tabs)
- Put my phone:
 - out of reach
 - in another room
 - face down

BUILD YOUR DEEP-WORK RITUAL (CONT)

4. One Clear Intention (Most Important)

What is the one task I will work on?

If I finish early, I will continue by:

BUILD YOUR DEEP-WORK RITUAL (CONT)

5. Distraction Plan

What usually pulls my attention away?

My top distraction: _____

What I'll do when the urge hits:

- Ignore it for 60 seconds**
- Write it down and return to the task**
- Take one deep breath and refocus**
- Others:** _____

BUILD YOUR DEEP-WORK RITUAL (CONT)

6. After the Session

What did I complete?

What distracted me most?

One thing I'll adjust next time:

BUILD YOUR DEEP-WORK RITUAL (BONUS!)

Track the Experience (optional)

(After each session, rate the following on a 1–5 scale:

Clarity

How clear was my thinking and understanding?

1 5

Productivity

How much meaningful progress did I make?

1 5

Stress Level

How stressed did I feel during the session?

1 5

(Lower is better)

Sense of Accomplishment

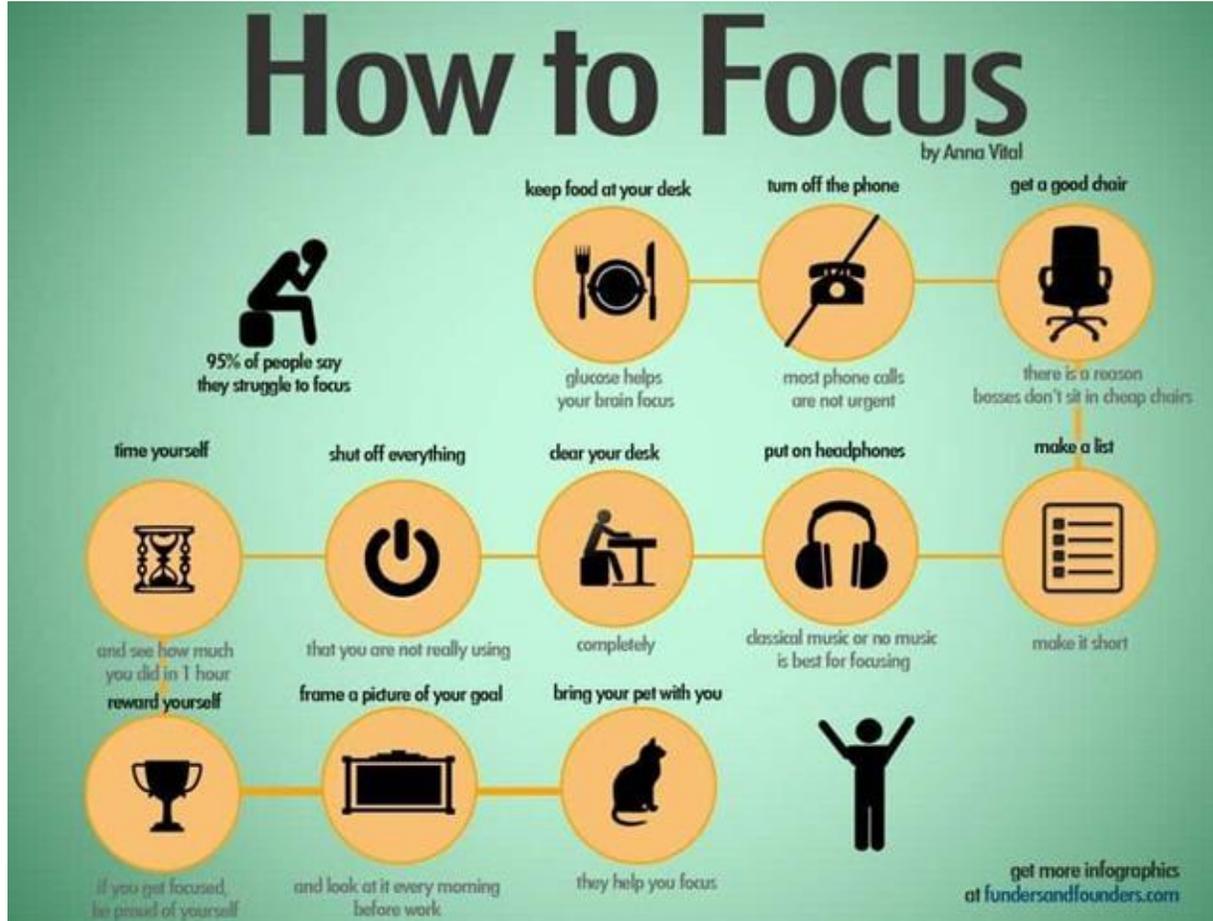
How satisfied did I feel afterward?

1 5

MAKE IT A WEEKLY CHALLENGE

- Schedule **two 60-minute deep work sessions** per week
- Pick times you can actually protect (not “ideal” times)
- Treat them like appointments with yourself

Technology rules for deep work ritual (recommended)



- Turn off all notifications
- Use Focus Mode / Do Not Disturb
- Silence group chats
- Block/deleting distracting apps if needed
- Keep ≤ 3 tabs open

DURING YOUR DEEP WORK SESSION: DO

- Start even if you don't feel focused yet
- Expect restlessness in the first few minutes
- Gently bring your attention back when it drifts
- Write down distractions to handle later
- Stay with the same task for the full block
- Take a real break when the timer ends

DURING YOUR DEEP WORK SESSION: DON'T

- Wait for motivation or the “right mood”
- Switch tasks mid-block
- Check notifications “just for a second”
- Multitask or keep extra tabs open
- Judge yourself for losing focus

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