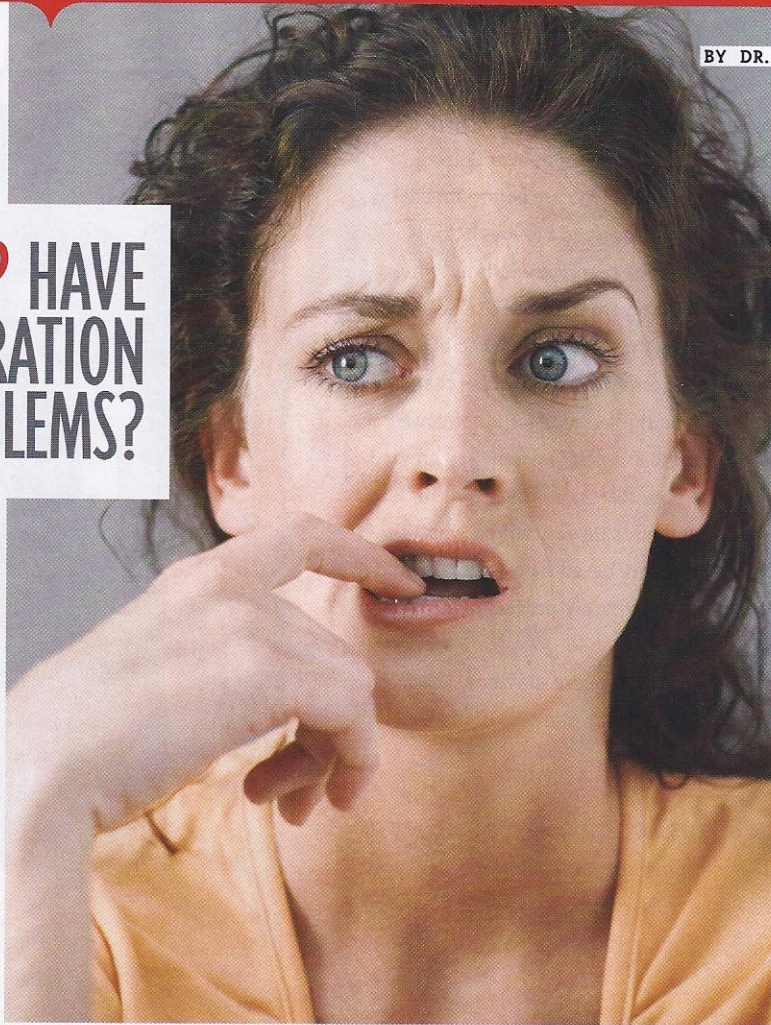


FORGETFUL? HAVE CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS?



WHY CONCENTRATION WRECKERS MAY BE AT THE ROOT OF YOUR PROBLEM—AND HOW TO CHANGE THAT!

Have you ever purposely walked into a room, knowing you needed something, only to find you couldn't remember what you were getting? Or had someone ask you something as simple as your telephone number, only to draw a blank?

Yep, us too.

In today's fast-paced world, we need to do a lot, in a very short amount of time. Downtime seems to be decreasing, while to-do lists seem to be increasing. A side effect of this hectic lifestyle is reduced or scattered concentration—which is a problem when the ability to pay attention is really an essential life skill!

To combat this widespread problem, first you need identify what's derailing you. Check out these five common concentration wreckers to identify the root of your problem.

Multitasking—Wearing too many hats is one of the main concentration killers. Research suggests we lose time whenever we shift our attention from one task to another. Multitasking can be overwhelming and can reduce brain efficiency, which leads to poor performance.

“WHERE ATTENTION GOES, ENERGY FLOWS AND RESULTS SHOW.”

—T. HARVEKER

The end result is that doing three projects simultaneously takes longer than doing them one after the other as it diminishes our results.

Boredom—When you're bored, almost anything can be more interesting than what you're doing. Dull tasks can deplete your ability to focus and make you more susceptible to a lack of concentration and even motivation.

Overload of stimulation—As individuals, we are inundated with information from our phones, computers, television and other sources of technology. Unfortunately, we can only process so much. When you're trying to concentrate, you can lose your train of thought just by hearing, “You've got mail” in the background. We often feel like we need to respond to an email, text, instant message, or

voice mail as soon as it's received.

Lack of sleep and fatigue—Concentration easily falls apart when we are sleep deprived. Studies show that loss of sleep impairs attention, short-term memory, and other mental functions. Getting at least seven hours of sleep will go a long way toward improving your focus during the day.

Hunger—The brain can't focus without fuel, therefore skipping meals—especially breakfast—is a top concentration killer. Research indicates that your short-term memory and attention span suffers when you rise and shine but do not dine.

In order to improve your concentration, you must train it. When mastered, concentration can be of unimaginable benefit, impacting your productivity and

giving yourself a greater peace of mind. The best way to improve your memory and concentration is to practice a variety of different techniques. Here are six things to try.

Change—Make it a habit to focus on one project at a time, particularly if you're working on an intense or high-priority task. A change in activity enables you to maintain your power of concentration without becoming tired of one activity. Save your multitasking skills for chores that are not urgent or demanding—it probably won't hurt to tidy up your desk while talking on the phone.

Breathe deeply—This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve the functioning of your brain immediately. Breathing deeply causes you to relax and puts more oxygen into your blood stream (therefore in your brain), both of which help. Studies have shown that relaxation improves brain function, while lower oxygen levels in the blood stream have been shown to decrease it. By breathing through your nose, you are more likely to breathe deeper. Proper breathing also helps eliminate toxins, strengthens the immune system, reduces stress, and gets the metabolism going.

Move your body—As if there weren't enough good reasons to get out and get your blood flowing, exercise greatly improves mental performance by bringing oxygen and nutrients to your brain. Even a daily walk of 20 minutes or more can greatly improve mental function.

Set time limits and allow for breaks—The mind benefits from periodic breaks during periods of concentration to help consolidate learning. By simply walking around or stretching for a few minutes, more oxygen is carried to the brain and you become more alert. It's good to refresh!

Eat right—Make sure you get enough "live nutrition," including fruits and vegetables. Sugar gives you a false increase in brain function, but will cause you to crash later on. Keeping your blood sugar stable also improves mental performance.

Eliminate distractions—To avoid cognitive overload, turn off your email, the browser, the phone, the iPod, the [add your own distraction here], etc.

Improving your concentration is not that hard, but does take some effort. These techniques, as well as adding fresh fruits and vegetables, exercising and practicing relaxation techniques, will improve your memory problems—letting you forget you even had them in the first place!

Dr. Sanford Silverman is a licensed psychologist who specializes in helping children, adolescents and adults in both the diagnosis and treatment of attention deficit disorder, learning disorders, autism, anxiety, depression and other clinical and behavioral disorders. He is the founder of Center for Attention Deficit and Learning Disorders and Center for Peak Performance in Scottsdale. For more information, visit www.centerforadd-az.com or call 480.314.4299.