Improving Concentration

Find a place that is quiet and will stay quiet – Research shows that certain noises can interfere with learning--including music, talking, and intermittent sounds such as doors opening and closing.

Aim for a consistent study environment - Study in the same place and use that place *only* for studying. Remove potential sources of visual and auditory distractions.

Intend to concentrate - Humans tend to do what they tell themselves to do. Therefore, it's easier to concentrate if you set a *specific* length of time to study and consciously tell yourself that "I will concentrate" for that length of time.

Prepare to concentrate - Have everything you will need before you begin to study: pencils, pens, paper, notes, textbooks, reference books, etc.

Use concentration promoting activities - Study with a pen or pencil in hand and condense what you read into organized notes. Rewrite and better organize lecture notes.

Vary your study activities - Read and take notes for a while, formulate questions and answers for a time, then recite and review to break the monotony. Another example is to do math problems for a while, then read another subject, review that subject, and then go back to math.

Set up a specific system for studying and learning - An effective step-by-step plan for studying and learning makes concentration easier. For example, try recopying notes or copying main ideas on note cards and using the note cards for memory drills.

Get plenty of night-time sleep - Adequate sleep is a good investment in better grades. Fighting sleepiness lowers concentration and performance.

Take regular study breaks - Individuals differ in the amount of time they are able to concentrate without a break. Study only as long as you are able to concentrate well. Take a short 5-minute break when your concentration wanders.

Set daily, weekly, monthly, and semester academic goals - It is easier to concentrate and feel motivated when you have goals and can see yourself progressing toward those goals.