

## DEALING WITH COMMON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS

Determine which distractions affect you.

Apply these strategies to help you concentrate.

### Internal Distractions

Boredom/Dislike of Subject

To combat boredom and dislike, find some reasons which satisfy you for taking the course and passing it. If you can't find any, talk with other students and/or the instructor. Form study groups to liven up your study times.

Anxiety Caused by Subject

One helpful way to diminish anxiety is to check your study skills, and make sure you know the most efficient ways to learn the subject. Check out the anxiety section of the SLAC website for more tips.

Personal Problems and Worries

When personal worries interfere with studying, do something concrete to help. Talk with a friend or family member or, if necessary, telephone or go to the campus counseling center ([www.counseling.txstate.edu/](http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/)).

Daydreaming

Learn to separate daydreams and studying by beginning to channel your daydreams. When your mind starts to wander, stop and recall important points you have just read. Then turn away from the book and try to continue the fantasy for a few minutes. When you're ready to read again, do so. The trick is not to daydream and read at the same time. Also, make sure you are spending more time studying than daydreaming.

Complexity of Study Task

A good way to deal with a complex study task is to break it up into small sections. Set a goal to accomplish a small section rather than the entire task. Try devising a system of "rewards and punishments" for having or not having accomplished what you intended to do.

Negative Reactions to Noise or Environment (Your Feelings and Self-Talk)

Be aware that it is not just the external distractions that bother you. For example, if you can hear your friends having fun while you are studying, you may be upset not only because of the noise but also because you are worried that you are missing out. Figure out why you are having negative reactions to the noise or the environment, and adjust your feelings and self-talk to overcome them. Addressing both the external and internal issues will improve your concentration.

Fatigue

Get a good night's sleep, and don't take daytime naps any longer than 10 minutes. Plan to study during the times when you are most alert, and build in short breaks while you are studying. On your break, drink water or walk around to keep yourself awake. Adjust the study and break times depending on your fatigue level.

