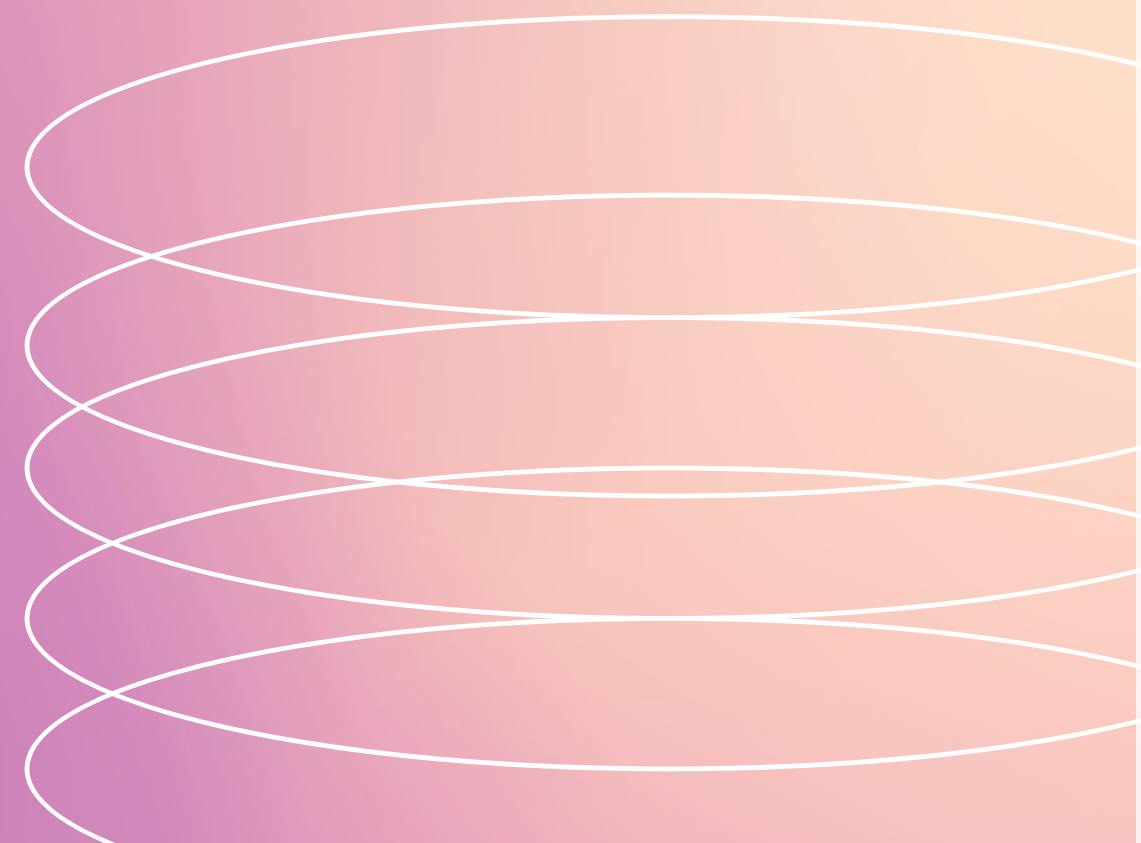


Improve Your Mental Focus

Zeina Ghoul, LLPC



Today we will discuss....

Introduction

What do you want to gain from this workshop? Why is focus so important?

Activity

Internal and external distractions – what they are and which ones interfere with your ability to focus?

Techniques

Techniques to help improve focus

Wrap up

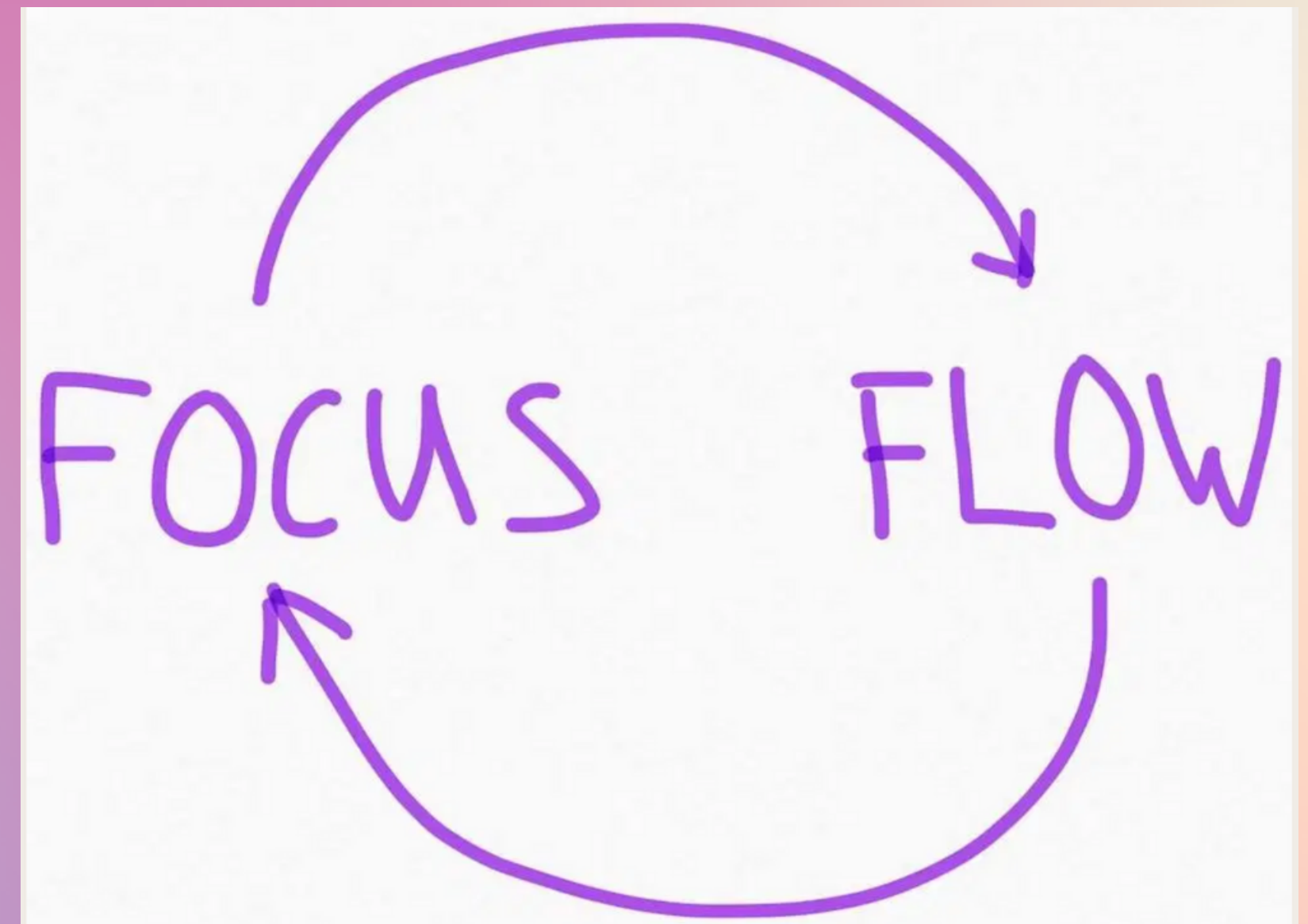
What are your goals to improve focus? What action steps can you take to make this happen?

What do you hope
to learn from
today's workshop
& why?

What is focus?

"a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so enjoyable that people will continue to do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it."

—Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



Why is focus so important?



Why is focus so important during learning/working on coursework

- 1. Get more done in less time = more "leisure time"**
- 2. Less mistakes**
- 3. Improve memory**
- 4. Easier to focus during exams & other areas of life**
- 5. Inner peace**

COMMON REASONS FOR LACK OF FOCUS

No plan/goals

Not understanding
material

External
distractions

Internal
distractions

Planning/ Goal Setting

- Prioritize study time
- Break studying/projects into smaller chunks
- Pomodoro technique

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE



DECIDE
ON THE
TASK TO
BE DONE



SET THE
TIMER TO
25 MINUTES



WORK ON
THE TASK
UNTIL THE
TIMER RINGS



TAKE A
SHORT
5 MINUTE
BREAK



TAKE A
15-30
MINUTE
BREAK

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 am			REC TIME			GET REDDY	LIE IN
6:30 am	LIE IN		GET READY				
7:00 am						TRAVEL	GET READY
7:30 am			QUICK TIDY UP				
8:00 am	GET READY						
8:30 am							
9:00 am	GUSSIE			STUDY			
9:30 am							
10:00 am				LONG BREAK			
10:30 am	REC TIME			STUDY			
11:00 am							
11:30 am				LONG BREAK			
12:00 pm				STUDY			
12:30 pm	READ				WORK		
1:00 pm			LUNCH				
1:30 pm			READ				
2:00 pm	GUSSIE TIME						
2:30 pm				STUDY			
3:00 pm							
3:30 pm							
4:00 pm	READ			LONG BREAK			
4:30 pm						R&R	
5:00 pm				STUDY			
5:30 pm	REC					READ	READ
6:00 pm				TEA			
6:30 pm					PACK	REC TIME	REC
7:00 pm	PLAN WEEK			REC TIME			PACK
7:30 pm						READ	
8:00 pm				READ			
8:30 pm						BED TIME	TRAVEL
9:00 pm				BED TIME ROUTINE			GUSSIE
9:30 pm					EARLY NIGHT		
10:00 pm				SLEEP			

Final Research Paper Plan

Things I need to get done:

- ② Research (find articles) (1hr)
- ① Brainstorm ideas for topic (30mins)
- ③ Create thesis (15mins)
- ⑥ Rough draft of 5 articles (2.5hrs)
- ④ Read research articles (1hr/article = 5 hrs) + Summarize
- ⑦ Rough draft of Intro (1/2hr)
- ⑧ Rough draft of conclusion (1/2hr)
- ⑨ Revise rough draft (1hr)
- ⑤ Create a mindmap of main ideas + details (1hr)

Time To Complete Paper = ~2 weeks, ~12hrs

Monday Aug 12th : #1 + #2

Wednesday Aug 14th : #3 + #4 (2 articles)

Friday Aug 16th : #4 (3 articles)

Saturday Aug 17th : #5 + #6 (1hr)

Monday Aug 19th : #6 (1.5hr) #7

Tuesday Aug 20th : #8, + #9

Thursday Aug 21st : #9 (1hr more time needed)

Due date Monday Aug 26th

External Distractions

Technology

Other people

Environment

Internal Distractions

Thoughts

Emotions

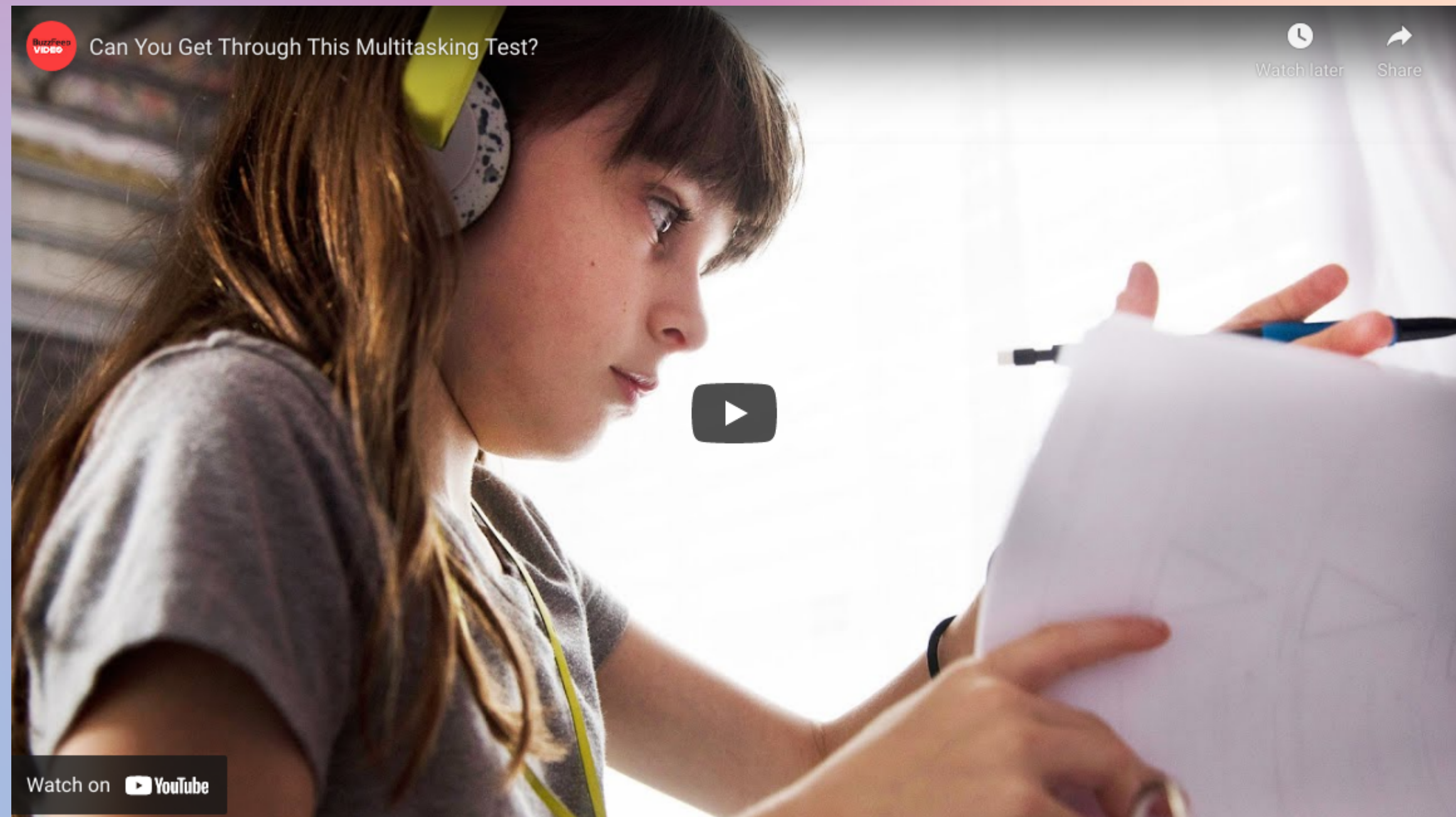
Physical

ACTIVITY

What specific internal
& external
distractions or other
things/situations
impact your focus?

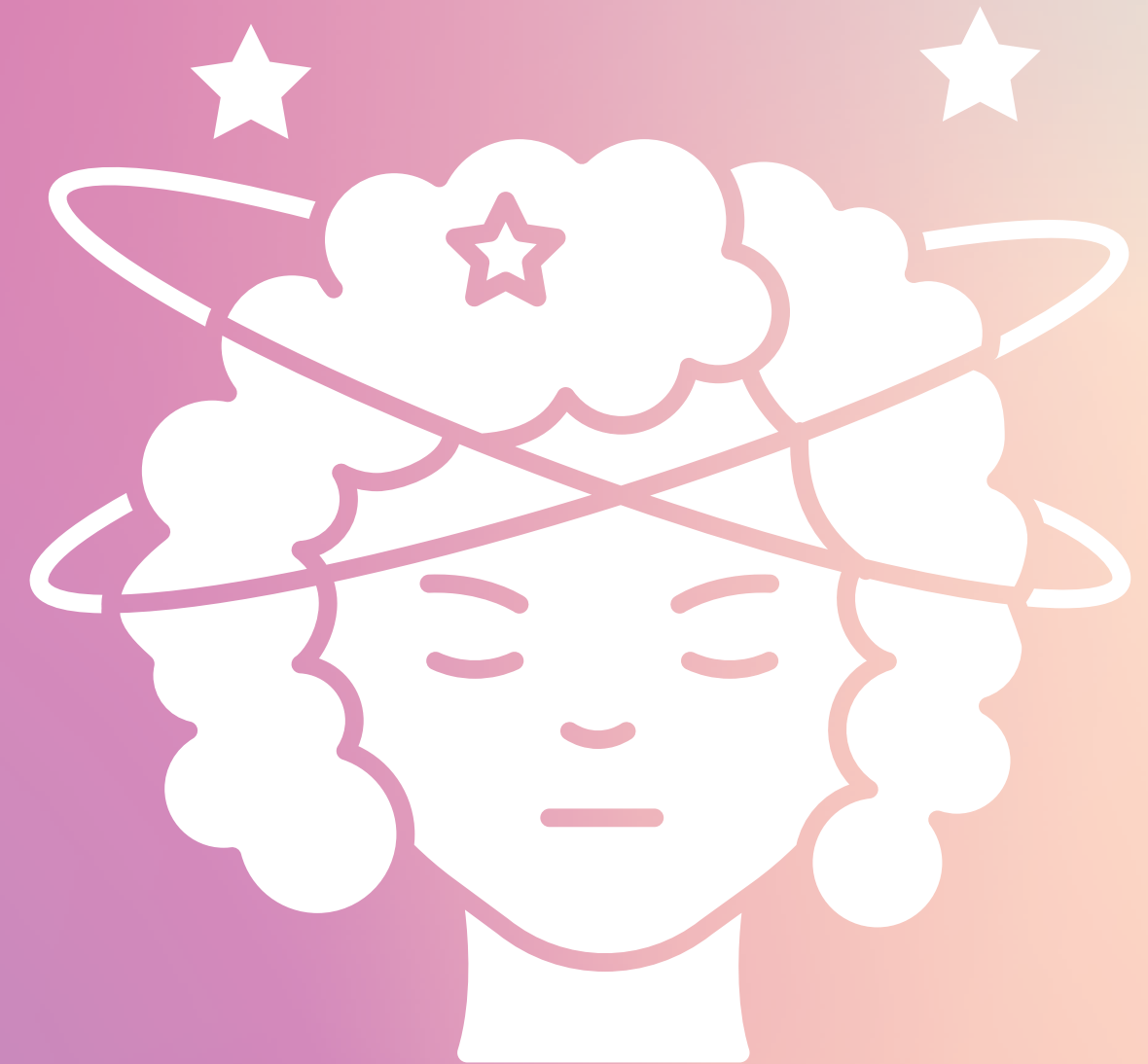
Managing External Distractions

- Environment
 - Avoid bed
 - At least area associated w/learning
 - Switch it up
 - Temperature, lighting, chair....
- Communicate w/others you live with
- Avoid tv, music with words, phone



Managing Internal Distractions

- Focus on one thing at a time – present moment – flow state
- Avoid multi-tasking
- If overwhelmed, de-stress
 - Deep breathing
 - Grounding techniques
 - Present moment
 - Expressive writing
- Prioritize physical and mental health



Grounding Exercises

Other examples:

- Hold a piece of ice
- Move in rhythm
- Count heartbeat
- Create gratitude list

The 54321 Grounding Exercise

This exercise will help your little one calm down and stay present when they're feeling anxious or overwhelmed.



5

Things that
you can

SEE



4

Things that
you can

FEEL



3

Things that
you can

HEAR



2

Things that
you can

SMELL



1

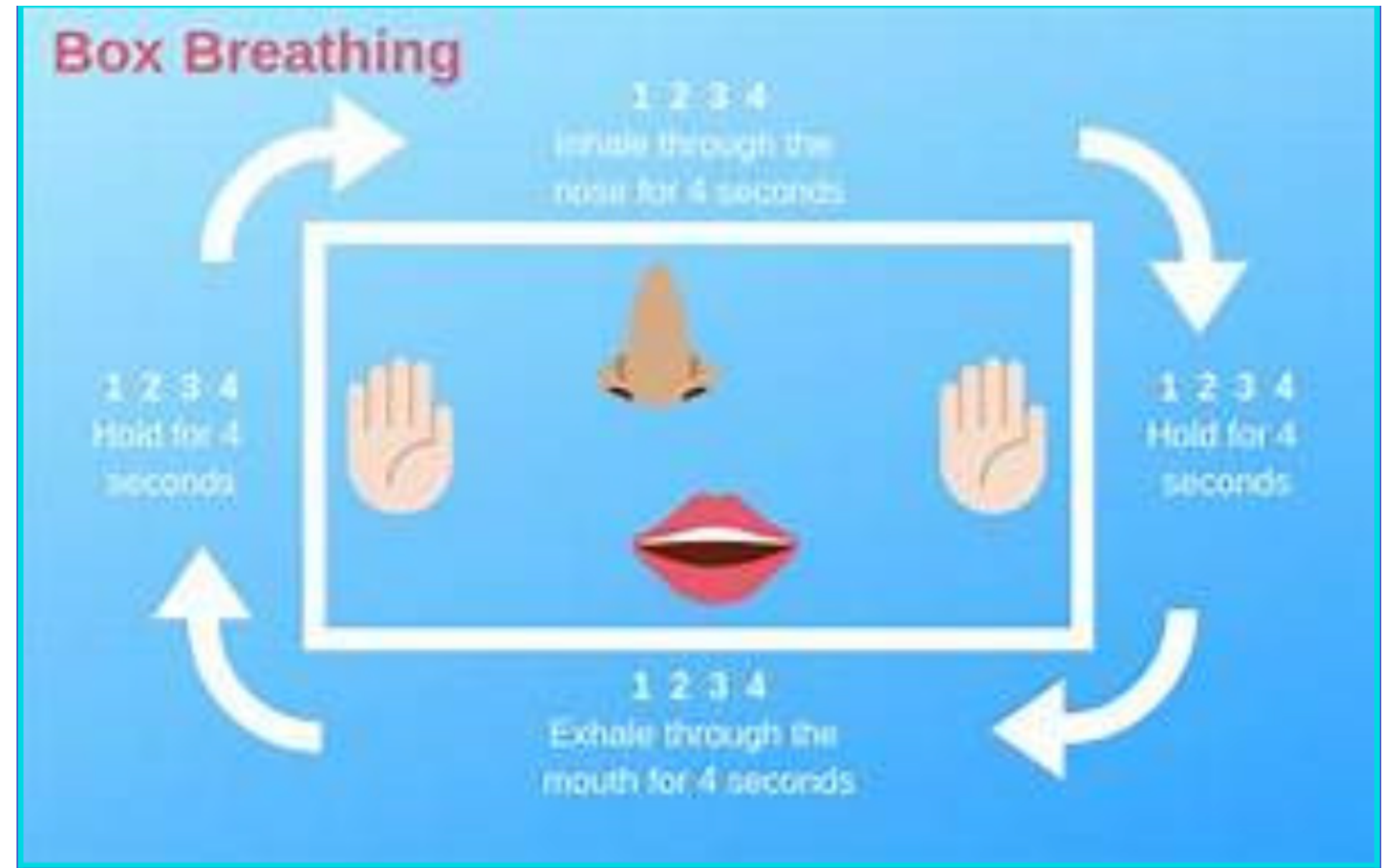
Things that
you can

TASTE



Deep Breathing

Stimulates
parasympathetic nervous
system



Expressive Writing

AKA "Brain Dump"

DAILY EXPRESSIVE WRITING EXERCISE

Cheat Sheet

IG: @MBDallocchio

1. Find a consistent space where you can write with minimal to no interruptions.
2. Be honest with yourself.
3. Sit down and begin writing for 15 minutes.
4. If you're experiencing recurrent thoughts, explore them.
5. Express yourself in any language that makes you comfortable. Don't worry about spelling or grammar.
6. Feel free to draw or doodle around your writing.
7. Ask yourself a neutral question to break from the fog.

General tips to improve focus

- **BACKGROUND
NOISE/EARPLUGS**
- **CONSISTENCY IS KEY**
- **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU
CAN CONTROL**
- **USE RESOURCES**
 - **PALS & STUDY SKILLS**
 - **OFFICE HOURS**
 - **PEER ASSISTED LEARNING**
- **KNOW YOURSELF & BE
HONEST**

Wrap-Up Activity



**What are your
goals to improve
focus?**



**What small action
steps can you
take to achieve
your goal(s)?**



**What can you do
if you fall off
track?**

Resources



✓ Study Skills Academy

<https://success.wayne.edu/study-skills>

✓ Peer-Assisted Learning

<https://success.wayne.edu/pal>

✓ Multi-Tasking Test

<https://multitasking.labinthewild.org/multitasking/>

✓ Focus sounds

- <https://simplynoise.com/>
- <https://rainymood.com/>
- <https://ambianceapp.com/>

✓ Focus apps

- Focus To-do: Focus Timer & Tasks
- Flora – Green Focus
- Portal: Escape Into Nature
- Mindfulness: Mental Health & Productivity