

Focus, Solved

Your Focus Toolkit



Solved

with Mark Manson

Your Focus Toolkit

Introduction

You already know what you're supposed to be doing right now. You just can't make yourself do it.

That's not a discipline problem, or a willpower problem. That's not even really a focus problem, at least not in the way most people mean it.

Think about a bee in a meadow. It lands on a flower, drinks the nectar, and at some point, when there's nothing left to drink, it flies off to find a better one. Not because it lacks discipline. But because that's exactly what a smart forager does.

Your brain works the same way. Scientists call it the explore-exploit dilemma: the constant calculation between staying focused on what's in front of you and exploring something potentially more rewarding. Every time you check your phone, open a new tab, or abandon a task mid-sentence, that's an ancient algorithm doing exactly what it was built to do.

The problem isn't the mechanism. The problem is that your environment has been specifically redesigned to game it.

Infinite scroll removed natural stopping points. Variable rewards made every notification feel like it might be the important one. Algorithms figured out exactly how to keep you engaged a few seconds longer, then a few seconds more. The result is that you're walking around with Stone Age attention hardware in a world precision-engineered to exploit it. This is not a character flaw. It's a structural mismatch.

And that changes everything about how you approach this.

Because if distraction is a signal—your brain's way of saying the estimated reward here has dropped—then the solution isn't to white-knuckle your way through it. It's to understand what your brain is actually responding to, and set up your environment so that staying focused becomes the path of least resistance.

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That's what this toolkit is for.

Inside, you'll find exercises designed to help you:

- Protect your attention from environments engineered to fragment it.
- Protect your energy so your brain has the capacity to stay engaged.
- Build systems that reduce reliance on willpower.
- Execute deliberately in the moment when distraction shows up.
- Diagnose lapses without turning them into identity.

Not every exercise will land equally for everyone. Your attention patterns are shaped by your work, your lifestyle, your nervous system, and the specific demands on your day. Think of this less like a prescription and more like a menu. Try things. Notice what shifts. Keep what fits.

Focus isn't a trait you either have or you don't. It's a negotiation. And once you understand what you're actually negotiating with, everything gets a lot simpler.

If you want to take this further, we have a 5-day Focus Experiment inside the Solved Membership where we turn these twelve tools, plus six more, into a structured sequence of daily actions.

One tool per day. Each one builds on the last. By the end of the week you're not just thinking differently about focus, you're actually working differently.

If that sounds like the right next step, you can learn more at membership.solvedpodcast.com

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Section 1: Protect Your Attention

If you want better focus, start by making distraction harder to reach. This section is about protecting your attention from the things that are designed to hijack it—feeds with no stopping point, devices that live within arm's reach, and "quick checks" that turn into twenty minutes. The goal isn't to become a monk, it's to set up your world so focus stops being a constant fight.

1

The Attention Diet

Concept

Treat information like food, and limit junk inputs, especially variable-reward systems like endless scroll, algorithmic feeds, and unpredictable notifications. Curate your information intake intentionally, the same way you would curate your diet if your energy depended on it. Because it does.

Why It Works

The modern information environment operates on the same principle as a slot machine: variable-ratio reinforcement. Rewards arrive at unpredictable intervals that produce persistent, compulsive engagement, a pattern well-documented in behavioral psychology.

Algorithmically optimized content exploits this mechanism at scale. Social media feeds, news apps, and recommendation engines are designed to deliver just enough reward, at just unpredictable enough intervals, to keep you checking. Over time, this recalibrates your brain's reward baseline. Subtler, slower rewards—reading a book, having a deep conversation, making progress on a meaningful project—start to feel insufficient by comparison.

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The “dopamine detox” trend is really just the recognition that removing high-frequency informational junk allows your reward system to recalibrate to signals that actually matter. Just like sugar, if you start your day on junk inputs, your brain spends the rest of the day craving more junk.

How to Do It

Step 1. Audit your daily information intake for one week. Track how much time you spend on algorithmic feeds (social media, news apps, YouTube recommendations) versus intentional content (books, specific articles, focused research). Most people are shocked by the ratio.

Step 2. Identify your top two to three junk information sources, the ones you consume compulsively without planning to. These are usually apps with infinite scroll, autoplay, or personalized feeds.

Step 3. Remove or restrict those sources. Delete the apps, use screen-time limits, or move them off your home screen. Replace the habit with a lower-stimulation alternative: swap algorithmic video for a physical book, a saved long-form article, or something you intentionally chose ahead of time.

Step 4. Reintroduce stopping cues. Before the internet, media had natural endpoints: a TV show ended, a newspaper had a last page, a book had chapters. Set your own episode limits, article counts, or timers.

Step 5. Reassess after two to four weeks. Notice whether your baseline restlessness has shifted and whether slower-reward activities feel more engaging than they did before.

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TIME & ENERGY AUDIT

1. HOW I SPENT MY LAST 7 DAYS

Write down approximate hours for each category

Work/Study	_____
Life Maintenance (chores, errands)	_____
Social Time	_____
Rest/Recovery	_____
Health (movement, sleep)	_____
Creativity/Play	_____
Self-Development (therapy, reading, learning)	_____
Passive Time (scrolling, autopilot activities)	_____

2. ENERGY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Rate each activity from 1-5:

ENERGY COST

ENERGY RETURN

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. WHAT STOOD OUT

Biggest time leaks were...
I'm overspending energy on...
High-cost/low-value activities were...
High-value activities I did not
prioritize were...

4. REBALANCE YOUR ENERGY

INCREASE

REDUCE

PROTECT

LET GO

5. BOUNDARIES

Do I need to set/strengthen my
boundaries?
YES / NO

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2

Environmental Design

Concept

Design your physical surroundings so focus is the default. Remove visible alternatives, reintroduce stopping cues, and strip your workspace down to what the current task requires. Use willpower once to build the environment, not repeatedly in the moment.

Why It Works

The brain constantly scans its surroundings and compares the current task against whatever else is visible and available. A 2017 study found that merely having a smartphone present — face-down, silent, untouched—significantly impaired working memory and executive function.

Physical clutter produces a similar effect: competing visual stimuli drain attentional resources even when you are not consciously engaging with them.

The implication is that focus failures often originate in the environment long before they show up as a lapse in concentration. If the space is working against you, discipline alone will not compensate.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Designate a specific physical space for focused work. If you work from home, avoid the couch, bed, or kitchen table. The goal is a contextual cue; when you are in this space, your brain knows what mode to enter.

Step 2. Strip the workspace to essentials. Clear physical clutter from your desk. Remove anything unrelated to the current task. If you use multiple monitors, ask whether they're helping or hurting your focus. Some people benefit from less screen real estate because there's less temptation to fill it. Others genuinely need more space. The goal isn't fewer screens, it's fewer distractions.

Step 3. Remove your phone to another room. Not in a drawer, not face-down on the desk—physically out of sight and reach.

Step 4. Match the setting to the cognitive demand. Deep analytical or creative work benefits from quiet, minimal environments. Lighter brainstorming or administrative tasks can tolerate and sometimes benefit from a little bit of chaos or ambient stimulation like a coffee shop or co-working space.

Step 5. Set it up once and maintain it. Spend your willpower building the environment—cleaning the desk, establishing the rules, organizing the space—and then let the environment carry the load going forward.

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3

Increase Switching Costs

Concept

Make digital distraction slightly inconvenient. This is about digital friction and device rules, not your physical workspace. That was Environmental Design. This is about making the click itself harder. Log out of apps, separate devices by function, use blockers, and turn off non-essential notifications. Small amounts of friction protect deep focus by raising the cost of impulsive switching.

Why It Works

One defining feature of the modern digital environment is near-zero switching costs. It takes less than a second to move from a work document to a social media feed. The brain, which evolved to shift between information sources when reward rates drop, will naturally drift toward the easiest available alternative.

Research on choice architecture and “temptation bundling” shows that even small friction, like a ten-second login screen or a brief pause before an app opens, can significantly reduce impulsive behavior by interrupting the automatic response loop. You do not need ironclad willpower. You just need enough friction to create a gap between impulse and action.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Log out of distracting websites and apps. Re-entering a password takes about ten seconds, often enough to break the automatic reach-and-scroll pattern. If logging out of everything feels excessive, pick one friction move and commit to it for a week.

Step 2. Turn off all non-essential notifications on your phone and computer. Every notification is a bid for your brain to switch into exploration mode. Keep only what genuinely requires immediate response. Everything else can wait for a scheduled check-in.

Step 3. If possible, separate devices by function. Use one device or browser profile for work and another for entertainment and personal browsing. This creates a hard contextual boundary.

Step 4. For high-stakes focus sessions—writing deadlines, deep research, creative projects—use app and website blockers such as Freedom, Cold Turkey, or Forest. These enforce friction even when motivation dips.

Step 5. Audit your digital environment monthly. New apps, subscriptions, and notification settings creep in over time. A periodic reset keeps switching costs where they need to be. Friction does not need to be dramatic. It just needs to exist.

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Section 2: Protect Your Energy

Focus isn't just psychological, it's physiological. You can build the best system in the world, but if you're under-slept, dehydrated, or running on sugar crashes, your brain simply doesn't have the capacity to stay engaged. This section is about upgrading the operating system your attention runs on.

4

Optimize Health and Energy

Concept

Sleep, nutrition, movement, and hydration determine attentional capacity at the most fundamental level. Attention is metabolically expensive. Schedule high-focus work during high-energy windows and protect the physiological foundations that everything else depends on.

Why It Works

These are operating-system-level factors, everything else runs on top of them.

Sustained wakefulness of seventeen to nineteen hours impairs cognitive performance to a degree comparable to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05%.

Even mild dehydration, a loss of just one to two percent of body weight in water, measurably impairs attention, working memory, and reaction time.

Blood glucose fluctuations from high-glycemic meals produce cognitive dips that directly affect sustained attention.

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A single bout of moderate exercise improves executive function immediately and for several hours afterward.

These factors have larger effect sizes than most productivity techniques, yet they are routinely neglected in favour of apps, hacks, and, let's face it: tasty snacks.

How to Do It

Step 1. Protect seven to nine hours of sleep. This is non-negotiable. If you are sleeping five to six hours, no system in this toolkit will compensate.

Step 2. Match your schedule to your chronotype. If you are a morning person, do deep work in the morning. If you are a night owl, stop trying to be productive at 6 a.m. Research confirms that the synchrony between chronotype and task timing matters more than the clock time itself.

Step 3. Stabilise blood sugar. Avoid high-glycemic foods before or during focused work sessions. Prioritise stable-energy foods: protein, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates.
Step 4. Stay hydrated. Aim for approximately 250 ml of water per hour during work sessions.

Step 5. Use exercise strategically. A midday workout can reset your energy for the afternoon. Schedule physical activity during your natural energy dip rather than during your peak focus window.

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5

Engage the Body

Concept

Physical embodiment strengthens attentional immersion. Movement, posture, sensory involvement, and tactile engagement deepen focus. The more embodied the task, the harder it is for the mind to wander.

Why It Works

Activities that involve the whole body—woodworking, running, playing an instrument, martial arts—naturally suppress the default mode network, the brain’s mind-wandering system, because the brain cannot afford to disengage from real-time sensorimotor demands.

Even for desk-based work, research on embodied cognition shows that physical engagement—handwriting, gesturing, manipulating objects—enhances encoding, comprehension, and sustained attention compared to purely screen-based interaction.

Posture matters too: slouching and physical discomfort function as low-grade distractors that compete for attentional resources.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Identify where you can add physical involvement to your work. Can you sketch ideas on paper instead of typing? Use a whiteboard? Build a physical prototype?

Step 2. Pay attention to your posture and physical state during work. Adjust your setup so you are comfortable but alert. A standing desk for part of the day, or alternating between sitting and standing, can help.

Step 3. For breaks, choose physical activities over digital ones. A walk, stretching, or a quick movement session resets your body and brain more effectively than scrolling your phone.

Step 4. If your work is entirely screen-based, consider pairing focus sessions with physical anchors: a specific chair, handwritten notes alongside digital work, or a pen in hand during review sessions.

Step 5. If you have hobbies that are more physical — cooking, sports, music, crafts — use them as your primary exploration breaks from cognitive work. They restore attention more effectively than passive consumption.

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Section 3: Build Systems Instead of Willpower

Most focus advice assumes the problem happens in the moment. It doesn't. The real leverage is upstream. If you're constantly fighting distraction at your desk, the system failed long before you sat down. This section is about building structures that make focus the default and willpower the backup plan.

6

Build Systems Instead of Relying on Willpower

Concept

Willpower is unreliable in the moment. Create structures that make the right action easier than the wrong one. High-leverage focus happens upstream, in system design, not in moment-to-moment resistance.

Why It Works

The ego-depletion model has been debated, but the practical finding holds: people who appear to have exceptional self-control typically rely less on willpower and more on habits, routines, and environmental design that reduce the need for in-the-moment decisions.

If you are sitting at your desk struggling to focus, **the failure often happened earlier—in the environment you did not design, the phone you did not remove, the goals you did not clarify, the sleep you did not protect.** Systems thinking shifts the intervention point from the moment of struggle to the conditions that precede it. The role of willpower is to build and maintain the system, not to override every impulse in real time.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Identify where you consistently fail. Is it the phone? Social media? Working from the wrong location? Skipping sleep? These are the places where you need a system, not more effort.

Step 2. Design a rule or structure that addresses each failure point. "Phone goes in the other room during work hours." "No screens after 9 p.m." "I go to the library for three hours every afternoon, no exceptions."

Step 3. Use willpower to install the system—set up the app blocker, clean the workspace, commit to the schedule—and then let the system carry you.

Step 4. Create personal guardrails based on self-awareness. Know your own tripwires. If a particular app, game, or habit is something you cannot moderate, do not try. Remove it entirely and build around the gap.

Step 5. Periodically review and refine. Systems that worked six months ago might need updating as your life changes. The point is not rigidity—it is removing the burden of constant in-the-moment decision-making.

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7

Clarify Why

Concept

Focus improves when work feels meaningful. Align tasks with personal values and intrinsic interest. Passion is not fluff, it is attentional fuel. When the brain perceives a task as genuinely important, it allocates resources accordingly.

Why It Works

Self-determination theory identifies autonomous motivation (doing something because you find it personally meaningful rather than purely because of external pressure) as one of the strongest predictors of sustained effort, deeper engagement, and higher-quality performance.

If the brain does not perceive the task in front of you as important, it will default to explore mode, because part of exploration's evolutionary purpose is searching for something that is worth paying attention to.

Chronic procrastination often reflects this pattern: the reliance on deadlines to force focus is a signal that genuine importance is missing, and the artificial urgency of a looming deadline temporarily substitutes for it.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Get clear on your values. What actually matters to you? What kind of work feels meaningful and worth your time? This is foundational work that no productivity technique can replace.

Step 2. For each major task or project, explicitly articulate why it matters. Not just “because it was assigned” — find the genuine connection to something you value: growth, helping people, creative expression, financial security, mastery.

Step 3. If you cannot find the connection, treat that as diagnostic information. A task that feels completely meaningless may need to be delegated, eliminated, or restructured.

Step 4. If you consistently rely on deadlines to force focus, take that as a signal. The pattern points to a deeper alignment issue between your work and your values, not a discipline problem.

Step 5. When you notice your focus flagging, check salience first. Ask: “Does this actually matter to me?” before reaching for a productivity hack. The answer often reveals that the problem is motivational, not mechanical.

If you're not yet clear on your values, or what really matters to you, there's a course inside Solved Membership that will fix that in less than a month. That's the first step you'll take as a new member if you decide to join. [You can learn more and start today at membership.solvedpodcast.com.](https://membership.solvedpodcast.com)

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8

Accountability Partnering (Body Doubling)

Concept

Work alongside another person—a friend, colleague, or even a stranger in a virtual co-working session—for a set period of time. The social presence of someone else working creates implicit accountability that makes distraction harder and sustained effort easier. You do not need to be working on the same task.

Why It Works

Social facilitation is the phenomenon whereby the mere presence of others enhances performance on well-practised or simple tasks, and it's one of the oldest findings in social psychology.

The effect operates through increased physiological arousal and heightened self-awareness: when someone else is present, even passively, the brain allocates more resources to task performance and monitors behaviour more carefully.

For knowledge workers, this translates to reduced impulsive switching and longer sustained focus sessions. The clinical literature on ADHD has formalised this as “body doubling” (working in the physical or virtual presence of another person to anchor attention) and reports consistent subjective and behavioral improvements. The mechanism is not surveillance or pressure, it is the subtle social signal that someone else is engaged in effortful work, which recalibrates your own brain's threshold for switching away from the task.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Identify a focus partner. This can be a friend, colleague, or someone from a virtual co-working community. The only requirement is that both of you are committed to focused work during the session.

Step 2. Set a shared session structure. Agree on a start time, end time, and what each person will work on. A simple format: check in briefly at the start ("I'm working on X for the next 90 minutes"), work silently, and check in again at the end.

Step 3. If meeting in person is not feasible, use a virtual co-working platform or a simple video call with cameras on and microphones muted. The visual presence of another person working is the active ingredient.

Step 4. Experiment with different formats. Some people prefer silent, parallel work. Others benefit from brief mid-session check-ins. Some prefer a single long session; others prefer shorter sprints with breaks. Find what works for your focus style.

Step 5. Use body doubling strategically for your hardest tasks, the ones you are most likely to avoid or lose focus on. Save it for the work that benefits most from the extra accountability rather than using it for everything.

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Section 4: Execute in the Moment

The previous sections were about planning ahead. This one is real time. Even with strong systems, you'll still hit moments where focus wobbles. Anxiety spikes. Boredom creeps in. Resistance shows up. These tools are for those moments when you're already at the desk and need to steer your attention deliberately.

9

Regulate Emotional Arousal

Concept

Focus requires a balanced nervous system. Too much anxiety fragments attention; too little motivation dulls it. Emotional regulation stabilises the physiological sweet spot for sustained attention.

Why It Works

The Yerkes–Dodson law describes an inverted-U relationship between arousal and performance: moderate arousal produces the best cognitive output, while both extremes, too high (anxiety, agitation) and too low (apathy, fatigue), impair it. When you are highly anxious, the brain over-perceives threats and tries to attend to all of them simultaneously, which is functionally equivalent to focusing on nothing. When you are emotionally flat, the brain lacks sufficient motivational signal to sustain engagement.

Nir Eyal's work on distraction argues that most impulsive task-switching is fundamentally an attempt to escape internal discomfort—boredom, anxiety, loneliness, frustration. Managing the underlying emotional state addresses the root cause of distraction, not just the symptom.

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How to Do It

Step 1. Before a work session, do a quick emotional check-in. On a scale of one to ten, how activated are you? Too low (sluggish, apathetic) or too high (anxious, agitated) both impair focus.

Step 2. If you are too activated, do five to ten minutes of calming activity before trying to focus: slow breathing, a short walk, journaling, or sitting quietly. The goal is to bring your nervous system back to baseline.

Step 3. If you are too low, do something mildly activating: a quick workout, cold water on your face, an energizing playlist, a brief social interaction.

Step 4. If you notice chronic emotional disruption—persistent anxiety, depression, unresolved grief, or trauma responses — recognise that these are foundational issues. No productivity system will compensate for ongoing emotional distress.

Step 5. Track the pattern over time. If you are consistently too activated or too flat before work sessions, that is diagnostic information pointing to something deeper that needs attention.

If you need more tools, ideas, or support with emotional regulation, we have an entire course and toolkit on Emotions inside [Solved Membership](#). It's the second course you'll take as a member after Values, Solved. Use it to experiment and find what helps you manage your emotions.

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10

The Do Something Principle (Just Start)

Concept

Here's the two minute rule for the "do something" principle: If a task takes less than two minutes, just do it immediately. If a task takes more than two minutes to complete, commit to working on it for just two minutes. Often the hardest part of focused work is starting. This technique lowers the barrier by making the initial commitment trivially small. Once you are two minutes in, momentum usually carries you forward.

Why It Works

Procrastination research consistently identifies task initiation, not task completion, as the primary point of failure. People delay not because the work itself is unbearable, but because the anticipated effort of starting feels disproportionately large.

The Do Something Principle works by collapsing that anticipatory barrier. For trivial tasks, immediate execution prevents them from accumulating into open loops that drain working memory.

For larger tasks, the two-minute commitment exploits a well-documented phenomenon: once people begin an activity, they tend to continue well beyond the minimal commitment, a pattern consistent with the finding that incomplete tasks create a state of cognitive tension that motivates continuation.

The technique also aligns with research on "starting small" as a self-regulation strategy: minimal initial commitments reduce the psychological cost of beginning, which is often the steepest barrier to sustained effort.

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How to Do It

Step 1. At the start of a work session, scan your task list for anything that can be completed in under two minutes: a quick reply, a file rename, a scheduling confirmation. Do these immediately to clear them from your mental queue.

Step 2. For larger tasks you have been avoiding, reframe the commitment: "I will work on this for just two minutes." Set a timer. The only rule is that you must start. You are not committing to finishing.

Step 3. When the two minutes are up, check in with yourself. Most of the time, you will want to keep going because the hardest part is already behind you. If you genuinely want to stop, stop. You still made progress.

Step 4. Use this technique specifically for tasks that trigger high avoidance. The larger and vaguer a task feels, the more useful a two-minute entry point becomes. Pair it with Clarify What (Tool 8) by identifying a two-minute first action within a larger session goal.

Step 5. Do not use the Do Something Principle as an excuse to fill your day with trivial tasks while avoiding important ones. The rule has two applications: clear the small stuff fast, and lower the barrier to the big stuff. Keep both in balance.

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11

Structured Mind Wandering (Incubation)

Concept

Schedule intentional breaks to let problems incubate. Walks, showers, and low-stimulation environments allow subconscious processing. Exploration becomes strategic instead of compulsive.

Why It Works

Creativity research has formalised what many high performers discovered intuitively: stepping away from focused work allows recombination and restructuring outside conscious control, a process known as incubation.

Charles Darwin alternated between intense desk work and repeated walks on his "Sandwalk" thinking path, sometimes using stones to count laps so he could let his mind wander without logistical distraction.

Henri Poincaré described mathematical breakthroughs emerging while boarding buses or walking, long after he had abandoned focused effort.

In foraging terms, this is strategic patch-leaving: exploit until returns collapse, step away, and let exploration handle the unresolved problems. The key condition is low stimulation, no screens and no new information input, so the default mode network can do its work without competing demands.

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How to Do It

Step 1. When you feel genuinely stuck on a problem—not bored, but stuck, where the next step is not obvious—stop working on it.

Step 2. Switch to a low-stimulation activity that does not demand cognitive effort: walk outside, do the dishes, take a shower, sit in a park. The key is no screens and no new information input.

Step 3. Do not try to solve the problem during the break. Let your mind wander freely. If ideas come, jot them down. If not, that is fine. The processing is happening regardless.

Step 4. Return to the task after a defined break; e.g., twenty minutes, an hour, the next morning. You will often see the path forward more clearly.

Step 5. Build these breaks into your routine rather than waiting for a crisis. Schedule a fifteen- to twenty-minute walk between deep work blocks. Make it part of the system, not a last resort.

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Section 5: Diagnose and Adjust

No system works perfectly. You will still get distracted. You will still lose momentum. The difference is what you do next. Instead of labeling yourself lazy or undisciplined, you want to read distraction as data. This final section is about turning lapses into information and adjusting accordingly.

12

Use Distraction as Diagnostic Feedback

Concept

When focus fails, ask what is missing: importance, clarity, calmness, or health? Distraction signals misalignment, not moral failure. Diagnose the root cause rather than forcing effort through the symptom.

Why It Works

The most important reframe in the science of attention is this: distraction is not a character flaw. It is diagnostic information. The opportunity-cost model of cognitive effort suggests that mental fatigue and the urge to switch tasks reflect the brain's calculation that your effort might produce more value elsewhere.

Forcing yourself to concentrate through sheer will without addressing the underlying cause is like taking painkillers for a broken leg: it suppresses the signal without fixing the problem. Most focus failures can be traced to one of four root causes:

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1. The work doesn't feel important. (Importance)
2. The next step isn't clear. (Clarity)
3. Your nervous system is dysregulated. (Calmness)
4. Your body is depleted. (Health)

Identifying which one is active in the moment is more effective than any generic productivity technique.

How to Do It

Step 1. When you notice your focus slipping, do not immediately guilt yourself or force your way through. Pause.

Step 2. Run through the four triggers. **Importance:** Does this task actually matter to me? **Clarity:** Do I know exactly what I need to do next? **Calmness:** Am I anxious, stressed, or emotionally activated? **Health:** Am I rested, fed, hydrated, and physically comfortable? (use the worksheet on the next page)

Step 3. Address whatever is actually missing. If it is importance, reconnect to the "why." If it is clarity, break the task down. If it is calmness, take five minutes to regulate. If it is health, drink water, eat something, or rest.

Step 4. Keep a simple log for one week: every time you get distracted, note which trigger you think caused it. Patterns will emerge that point to systemic issues you can address at the source.

Step 5. Remember: if you are at a job you find meaningless, surrounded by friction you cannot resolve, doing work that conflicts with your values, no amount of app-blocking or environmental design will fix your focus. The distraction is telling you something. Listen to it.

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FOUR TRIGGERS

IMPORTANCE

Does this task actually matter to me?

CLARITY

Do I know exactly what I need to do next?

CALMNESS

Am I anxious, stressed, or emotionally activated?

HEALTH

Am I rested, fed, hydrated, and physically comfortable?

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Finally...

Here's something nobody tells you about focus: the people who are best at it aren't the ones who finally found the perfect system. They're the ones who stopped expecting the system to do the work for them.

You will still lose afternoons to doing nothing. You'll still find yourself twelve tabs deep with no memory of how you got there. That's fine. You're a human trying to pay attention in an environment that's specifically engineered to make that hard.

What changes isn't the distraction. It's how fast you find your way back.

That's what these tools are for. Finding what works to train your focus. Some will click immediately. Others will only make sense six months from now, when your life looks different and you need a different answer.

So experiment. Be patient with yourself. Trust the process of trying things and adjusting. The goal was never to not wander.

It was always to know how to come back.

And if you want to go deeper, the [Solved Membership](#) is where that happens.

When you join, you'll get six more tools for focus on top of the twelve in here, and a 5-Day Focus Experiment to put them into practice. You can also start the Values, Solved course—because sustainable focus doesn't begin with productivity tactics. It begins with knowing what actually matters to you. When that's clear, the strategies in this toolkit stop feeling like discipline and start feeling obvious. The Clarify Why exercise you just learned? That's just the start of that conversation.

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From there, you'll move into the Emotions, Solved and Boundaries, Solved courses—because as you've seen here, managing your emotional state and protecting your attention aren't nice-to-haves. They're the foundation your focus runs on.

Inside our accountability groups, you'll find Body Doubling that actually works—real people, showing up consistently, so you don't need to rely on motivation alone to get things done.

This knowledge is only useful if it changes something. If you take action on it, day after day. That's what Solved Membership is built for. [Learn more and jump in here.](#)

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