

DEALING WITH ELECTRONIC DISTRACTIONS

Cell phones, laptops, and desktop computers can easily distract you from studying. Developing the self-control to ignore these electronics is ideal, but if you find yourself struggling to keep focus, here are a few strategies that can help you concentrate on your tasks.

IDENTIFY YOUR ELECTRONIC DISTRACTION



Is it the games on your phone or the web browser on your computer that is sidetracking you? Recognize your distracting activities and identify whether you are struggling because you are initiating the electronic distraction (e.g., checking the Facebook newsfeed) or because you are reacting to it (e.g., responding to a text, following up on a notification). With your specific tendencies in mind, read the following strategies and determine how to adjust them to fit your needs.

USE THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE



The [Pomodoro Technique](#) asks you to commit to spending 25 uninterrupted minutes on a chosen task. This means that you won't be checking Facebook, watching YouTube, or doing any other distracting activities during these 25 minutes. First, write down the task that you want to get done, set a timer for 25 minutes, and get to work. Once the timer rings, draw a check mark next to your task if you worked for 25 minutes without getting distracted. Then, take a 5-minute break. During this time, you can check your social media sites, your texts, or your emails. At the end of the 5-minute break, begin another 25-minute interval if you have not completed your 5-minute task. At the end of about four 25-minute intervals, take a longer break of about 15-30 minutes. By working in 25-minute intervals and having small breaks, you are separating your study time from your timewasters, but you aren't cutting yourself off completely from electronics.

USE PROGRAMS OR APPLICATIONS

The following apps and programs can help prevent distractions and increase your concentration.

Browser Extensions



[StayFocusd ---](#)

This free Chrome extension allows you to specify how much time you can spend on certain websites. Once you use up your allotted time, StayFocusd will block the site for the rest of the day. Chrome and StayFocusd can be downloaded onto both Macs and PCs.



[LeechBlock](#)

This free FireFox add-on allows you to block selected sites at specific times of the day. Firefox and LeechBlock can be downloaded onto both Macs and PCs.

Macs



[Self-Control](#)

This free app lets you block any websites or mail servers for as long as you specify. Be careful! Nothing can get you access to these sites until your time is up. Even resetting your computer will not help.

[Concentrate](#)



This \$29 app allows you to set up a variety of customized actions, such as blocking sites or quitting apps, so that you can concentrate on what you need to get done. When you start the timer, the customized actions will go into effect until time is up. If you need the program to stop, you have the option of resetting your computer to regain access to sites and apps.

Android



[Focus out Distractions](#)

This free app allows you to select apps to block for a certain amount of time. To unblock the apps before time runs out, you must type in a paragraph acknowledging that you are sabotaging your time.

Macs or PCs



[Freedom](#)

This \$10 program does not allow you to access the internet for a set amount of time. If you really need to use the internet, you have the option of resetting your computer to stop the program.



[Anti-Social](#)

This \$15 program allows you to block certain websites for a specified amount of time. If you need to regain access to a blocked website and your time is not over, you can reset your computer.