

Here are some tips for getting focused – a state we often crave but can find hard to achieve.

1. **Make choices:** so you know what to focus on: What outcome do you want? What do you need to focus on to get that outcome?
2. **Clear space:** Most of us are easily distracted, often by the papers and files dealing with other topics that lie around our workspace. One way to help focus is to put anything you're not working on away or out of sight.
3. **Get into the mood:** notice which moods help and which hinder focus. Does a mood of frustration or resignation hinder, for example? A mood of confidence or determination help? Focus might mean a shift from a mood that hinders to one that you know helps.
4. **Give yourself permission to focus:** this may sound odd but, when faced with a lot of demands, we can feel we should be making headway with all of them. We need to get comfortable with ignoring everything but what we're focused on.
5. **Start small:** Choose a task and focus on it for just 15 minutes to start with. Use a timer or clock. Review the experience - what do you learn that can help you focus for longer?
6. **Know your enemy:** For many people the biggest threat to focus is doing one task while tinkering with other tasks at the same time. The best way to gain focus is to do one thing at a time.
7. **Be honest around interruptions:** many of us claim we could get focused if only we weren't being constantly interrupted. Yet at some level, we can actually welcome interruptions – concentrating is hard work such that an interruption can be a relief, making us feel needed and giving us a break. Check out if this is true of you.
8. **Decide how you'll handle any interruptions:** that way you're prepared to, for example, tell people: 'Not now, but I'll be free at...' Being assertive with others is an important component of focus.
9. **Enjoy yourself:** getting really engrossed in something that interests you is a pleasurable state. Learn to savour those times of focus and concentration when you're lost to the world.
10. **Complete tasks:** so often we get about three quarters of the way through something then leave it. As a result our minds are often scattered with so many unfinished tasks floating around. Probably the biggest difference you can make to your feeling of being focused is to finish things off.

These Being Focused tips were provided by [Chris Carling](#) who is the author of [A Useful Guide to Overcoming Anxiety](#).

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