

CONCENTRATION

Concentration = Focused thinking (Pauk, 2005)



Creating a Study Environment

Find a place where you can concentrate and study; keep it for study only.

- Tool-up the environment with all study needs: good lighting, ventilation, comfortable chair and a desk large enough to spread out your materials
- Control noise level and the visual environment to acceptable levels
- Avoid relaxing while working; create a work atmosphere
- Usually studying on your bed is not a good idea (it's for relaxing!)

Ideas for Study Locations at USC

Thomas Cooper Library
Empty Classroom

Russell House 3rd Floor Lounge
Coffee Shops

The Best Times to Study....

- During the day and early evening; you'll remember information better
- When there are the fewest competing activities in progress
- When you are rested

Stop studying when fatigue or lack of attention occurs.

Improve Your Concentration!

- Set study goals before you begin (based on number of pages, problems, etc.)
- Switch it up! Divide the study periods by alternating between subjects/tasks
- Keep a notepad handy to jot down extraneous thoughts that cross your mind while studying
- Keep score of your concentration by putting check marks on a sheet of paper for each time your mind wanders
- Study with a pencil in your hand, preparing to take notes as needed
- Minimize distractions such as IM, internet, phone, etc.
- Start with short study periods and build to longer periods only as fast as you maintain concentration
- Take a break! Design adequate rewards after specified goals are met. Keep your ratio 5 to 1 (i.e., work 50 minutes; break 10 minutes)
- Make the most of rest periods - do something different

Adapted from: Dartmouth College's Academic Skills Center: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/docs/concentration_tips.doc
& Walter Pauk's *How to Study in College*

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