



*ACT Now Coaching Presents*

# *The Function of Focusing*

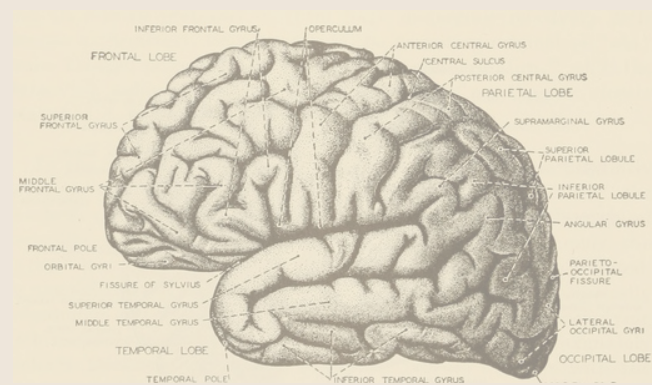


## *FOCUS: THE BASICS*

In our fast-paced world, the ability to focus and maintain concentration is a precious skill. However, it's not just about willpower. It's about understanding the intricate workings of your brain and employing strategies that can help you enhance your concentration, adapt your mind to new challenges, and sharpen your executive functioning skills. In this short e-book, we'll explore the science behind focus and provide practical guidance on improving your executive functioning.

Difficulty focusing can stem from a range of factors, including distractions in the environment (noise, digital devices, or interruptions), high levels of stress and anxiety, lack of interest in the task at hand, and physical or mental fatigue. Trying to multitask by juggling multiple tasks at once can also divide attention and reduce the effectiveness of focusing.

The part of the brain that controls organizing, planning, focusing, and decision making is called the frontal lobe. When the frontal lobe is not optimally functioning, common consequences may include difficulties in decision-making, impulse control, problem-solving, personality changes, emotional lability, and deficits in executive functions.



## *WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING?*

Executive functioning is the brain's command center for high-level cognitive processes, such as decision-making, planning, organization, and self-regulation. These skills play an important role in one's ability to focus, and are crucial for success in all aspects of life, from work to relationships.

## *EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION*

Executive dysfunction refers to a set of cognitive and behavioral difficulties related to the brain's executive functions. It is a common symptom in people with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism, and traumatic brain injuries, but it can also occur or worsen as a result of prolonged stress, depression, anxiety, and a lack of consistency and stability in life.

Adults experiencing executive dysfunction often have trouble managing tasks and meeting deadlines, regulating emotions, setting schedules, being on time, and focusing.

# *EXECUTIVE FUNCTION RESET*

Executive functioning can be improved and restored. Some techniques and exercises you can practice to strengthen your executive functioning and improve your focus include:

## **Set Goals:**

Start by defining your goals and breaking them down into smaller, manageable steps. This provides a clear roadmap for your actions.

## **Use Visual Tools:**

Visual aids such as calendars, to-do lists, and planners can help you organize tasks and deadlines effectively.

## **Use Time Management Techniques:**

Techniques like the Pomodoro Technique (see page 7), where you work in focused bursts with short breaks, can improve time management and concentration.

## **Practice Mindfulness:**

Mindfulness exercises, such as meditation and deep breathing, can enhance impulse control and emotional regulation.

## **Stay Organized:**

Create routines and systems for keeping track of important information, both in your personal and professional life.

# ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

“Brain Dumping” involves writing down everything on your mind prior to starting a task. In doing so, you are purging excess information and clutter to make room for clarity and higher cognitive processes. A brain dump can look like scribbling and note taking, or it could have an order like the example below.

In this example, tasks are ‘dumped’ here and assigned a priority level: H = High, M = Medium, and L = Low. Then, once completed, check ‘done.’

TASKS	PRIORITY			DONE
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )
_____	(H)	(M)	(L)	( )

# SETTING GOALS

Print this sheet or copy the template to a journal or planner.

**Date :**

**Main Goal :**

**Start Date :**

**Deadline :**

**Motivation :**

**Reward :**



**Action Plan :**

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**Review :**

**Note to self :**







# TIME MANAGEMENT

Techniques like the Pomodoro Technique help you work in focused bursts and can improve your time management, productivity, and concentration.

## THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE®

A SIMPLE METHOD TO BALDANCE FOCUS WITH DELIBERATE BREAKS

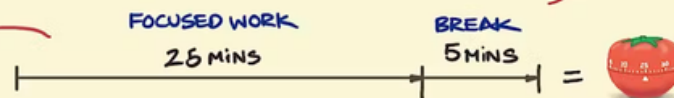


1 PLAN YOUR TASKS  
How many pomodoros might you need?

2 DO 1 POMODORO  
Time for 25 mins then take a 5 min break

NO SNEAKY WORKING!

PROTECT YOUR POMODORO!



3 REPEAT x 4 POMODOROS  
Then take a longer break



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sketchplanations

**Tune in:** Building on the Pomodoro Technique, Bobby Lyte has created *Flow State*, which provides 30 minute sessions of motivating/up tempo music, with 5 minute breaks of binaural sound waves.

**Take Breaks:** Productive breaks may include stretching, hydrating, deep breathing, having a snack, or going outside for some sunshine. Try to take a break from screens during this time!

# *ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS*

Distractions are anything that takes our attention away from the task at hand. Some distractions are annoying, while others can be addicting. Here are some ways to mitigate physical, emotional, behavioral, and social distractions:

## **PHYSICAL**

Practice good posture, especially while working.

Get plenty of sleep.

Stretch or exercise on breaks.

## **EMOTIONAL**

Brain dump your thoughts/feelings.

Communicate openly.

Allow yourself space to process your emotions. Know that it's okay to have off days.

## **BEHAVIORAL**

Practice meditation.

Use calendars and reminder apps to stay on track.

Hold yourself accountable to form better habits, or work with a professional who can help.

## **SOCIAL**

Turn off notifications while working.

Set boundaries with friends and relatives when you need to work.

Avoid checking social media during work hours. Delete the apps if you need to.



## *BONUS TIP*

# *Play More*

Brain exercises such as performing math calculations mentally or drawing maps from memory can sharpen cognitive skills. Participating in activities like cooking classes, art classes, and learning foreign languages challenges and stimulates parts of the brain that may not always be in use. Additionally, strategic activities like puzzles, chess, sudoku, and crossword puzzles can provide valuable mental workouts. Try incorporating these activities into your downtime.

## *Want Extra Support?*

To sign up for a complimentary coaching call, please visit our [contact page](#).

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