



INTRO

The amount of useful work done equals: $\text{TIME} \times \text{CONCENTRATION LEVEL}$

For example:

One hour of math study x half concentration = half of the possible work done

So: How do you prepare to concentrate?

- relax to be receptive
- focus to be efficient

STRETCHING

Why bother?

- a relaxed state is a receptive state
- a tense state is not a thinking state - it's a "danger" state
- stretched muscles are relaxed muscles
- stretching is good for circulation -- brings oxygen and energy to the brain

Stretching Exercises

- any common stretching exercises for the major muscle groups will do
- for instance:
 - stand up - lift left leg back and hold with left hand - hold the stretch - same for right leg
 - stand with legs shoulder width apart, with both hands, bend to touch left knee, left ankle, floor, then move back to left knee and repeat on right side

CROSS-OVERS

Why bother?

- cross-overs are good for preparing both sides of the brain for active functioning
- brings oxygen and energy to the brain

Cross-Over Exercises

- touch right elbow to left knee, alternate - repeat five times
- touch right hand to left heel behind you, alternate - repeat five times
- touch right hand to left shoulder, alternate - repeat five times
- make up some more for yourself

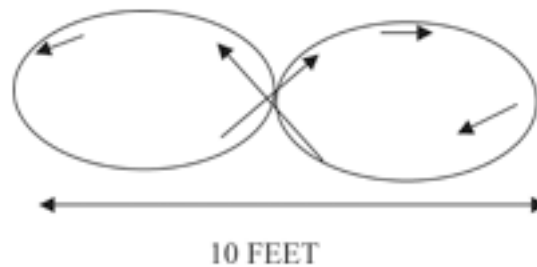


FIGURE 8 WALKS

Why bother?

- this exercise puts stretching and cross overs into an interesting and more complex pattern
- this will focus your mind by clearing out the “noise”?

Figure 8 Exercises



1. Walk this pattern - make sure you start in the centre and move up to the left.
2. Walk it with arms swinging to shoulder height - right hand with left foot and vice versa.
3. As you walk the Figure 8, recite the month name with its number, e.g. January - One, February - Two, etc.? then do it backwards, e.g. December - Twelve, etc.
4. Try it with the alphabet, e.g. A-One, B-Two, etc.? Then reverse as above.

MUSCLE ISOLATION

Why bother?

- it helps to focus and clear out mental “clutter”
- it helps to control your eye movement

Muscle Isolation Exercises

While seated:

1. Relax right arm and tense left calf - and vice versa.
2. Relax left arm and wiggle right toes - and vice versa.
3. Relax both arms and tense toes.
4. Lift one foot off floor with tensed toes, tap other foot on floor - change feet.
5. Make up some of your own.



RELAXATION

Why bother?

- once again: a relaxed state is receptive to learning and thinking while a tense state is a “danger” state
- relaxation brings fresh air into the lungs, and oxygen to the brain

Relaxation Drills

1. Close your eyes. Slowly drop your head and relax your neck and shoulders.
2. Relax shoulder muscles by raising your shoulders to your head and releasing. Do shoulder rolls.
3. Take a deep breath, exhale everything out of your lungs. Repeat up to ten times.
4. Relax your arms and do wrist rolls - particularly if you will be writing.
5. Make up some of your own.

Distractions and Interruptions

- control the TV, phone, dog, siblings, and distracting music - get someone to take messages when you're studying
- find a private place to study - use the library if necessary
- have good lighting and sufficient space

OPENING YOUR EARS

Why bother?

- it will prepare your brain to be more receptive to sound

Open Your Ears Exercises

1. With your right hand, unfurl the edges of your left ear lobe from top to bottom.
2. Switch and repeat several times.



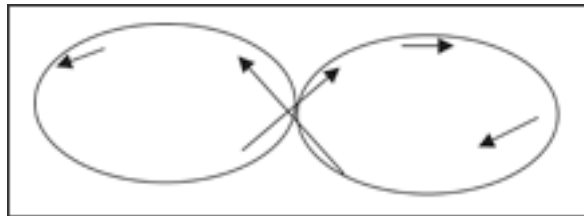
VISION AND CONCENTRATION DRILLS

- these drills prepare your eyes for reading
- eye muscles need to be controlled so your eyes scan faster down the page without backtracking

Why bother?

- they help to prepare the whole brain for the activity
- they extend your peripheral vision

Vision and Concentration Drills - Figure 8's

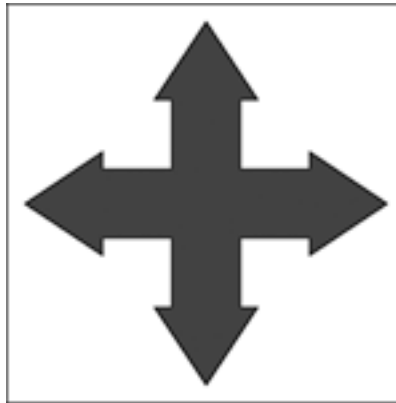


While seated:

1. Take your right index finger and starting in the centre and moving up to the left, draw this pattern on a table or in the air in front of you. Make sure your eyes are focused straight ahead and not following your finger.
2. Gradually enlarge the figure 8 using more and more of your arm. Switch arms. Use both arms.
3. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 with eyes following your fingers (without moving your head from the straight ahead position).
4. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 while alternating your eyes between following your finger and keeping your eyes focused straight ahead.



Peripheral Vision Exercise



1. Focus on the centre of the object (the arrowheads will blur).
2. Move your vision out to take in the whole object.
3. Move your eyes back in to the centre.
4. Keep moving eyes in and out.
5. Imagine a similar, bigger object on the wall (or use a picture on the wall) and repeat this exercise.

PREPARE YOUR OWN RELAX AND FOCUS ROUTINE

From all of these exercises:

- prepare a 1-2 minute routine which best helps you to relax and focus before important tasks
- do this to instrumental/classical music you feel most comfortable with
- use your routine before studying, exams, etc.

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