

Tips for Academic Success

Sustained Attention

Sticking with a task across an extended period of time.

CHALLENGES

Research suggest that most people can sustain attention optimally for about 20 minutes!

Harder for everyone if the task is:

- Boring
- Repetitive
- Requires extensive effort
- Perceived as too hard or too complex

Harder for everyone if:

- Poor sleep schedule
- Not feeling well
- Stressed

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINED ATTENTION

Set up realistic work blocks

2 hour work bursts

Determine the optimal time of day to work

Schedule work bursts accordingly

Take a break (non-electronic break) every 20 minutes

- Get up
- Walk around
- Take a drink of water
- Have a snack

Determine optimal level of stimulation

- Do work best in quiet?
- Do you need earplugs?
- Moderate level of noise?
- Background music with no lyrics?
- Noisy coffee shop?

Switch topics frequently

Every hour - change topic or assignment.

Example: study an hour of physics, then an hour of chemistry

Switch study places frequently

Monday - Kelvin Smith Library

Tuesday - SAGES Cafe

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Read and Write Gold Edition

Customizable tool bar that can assist users with accessing reading, writing, studying, and research tools. Examples: text-to-speech, talk-to-text, screen masker. *Every CWRU student can access this software for free through the software center.*