**Optimizing Attention: A Guide for Effective Study Plans**

**PART 1: Prepare a Personalized Study Plan**

To make the most of your study time, it’s important to optimize your attention. This worksheet will help you identify factors that influence you attention, and allow you to develop a personalized study approach. As you analyze your attention and work habits, consider talking with your friends or family to get more perspectives from those that know you well.

**STEP 1: General attention helpers and blockers**

First, it’s helpful to think generally about what sort of things influence your attention so you can include these considerations in your study/work approach.

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| **Attention Helpers -** *What sorts of strategies increase your attention and work completion?*  *(e.g., Incorporating movement into studying by using a standup desk?)* |
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| **Attention Blockers -** *What sorts of factors get in the way of your attention or work completion?*  *(e.g., Sitting at a table with friends? Social media?)* |
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**STEP 2: Signs you may be off-task**

By knowing your warning signs, you can monitor and prompt yourself to re-focus or take a break. Identifying the warning signs that you may be off-task

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| **Body Signs** - *What are the body signs you may be off-task?*  *(e.g., Fidgeting, tensing muscles, wandering eyes)* |
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| **Cognitive Signs** - *What are the cognitive signs you may be off-task?*  *(e.g., Day-dreaming, re-reading paragraphs, unable to solve a problem)* |
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| **Other Signs** - *What are some other signs you may be off-task?*  *(e.g., On social media, talking with friends, feeling bored or frustrated)* |
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**STEP 3: Preparing to promote attention**

Next, complete this table using the information you generated in STEPS 1 and 2 to form your study plan.

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| **Choose your STUDY ENVIRONMENT** **carefully!**[*Study Spaces at UNC*](http://library.unc.edu/places/study/)  *Do you focus better in absolute silence or with background noise? Does the presence of peers help or hinder your focus? Is your focus compromised in your dorm room or certain library locations?* |
| *DO:* |
| *AVOID:* |

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| **Think about TIME!**  *How long can you work before needing a break? What length break is optimal? What times of day is your attention at its best? What times of day does your attention wane?* |
| DO: |
| AVOID: |

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| **What else should you consider to optimize attention?**  *Are your materials organized? Have you prioritized your tasks? Have you selected a method to study? Do you need food/drink? Study partner?* |
| DO: |
| AVOID: |

**What will you do differently to help manage your attention? Select your three main takeaways.**

**Now check out PART 2 to learn how to track and monitor your attention, and evaluate your study approach!**