



mattmcwilliams.com

## Help, I Can't Focus. 8 Steps to Regain your Focus

**Have you ever lost your focus and wondered, "How can I get it back?"**

I received an email recently from a reader that read:

I am just starting my business and I work by myself.

Sometimes I can go all day focused. Sometimes I can go only go for hours. But when I lose my focus, I am done for the day. I cannot get it back.

Any suggestions?

I can sympathize with this person because I have been there, done that...it was called yesterday. OK, just kidding. Yesterday was actually an exceptionally focused day. But I have gone through it often.

Your input here is invaluable, so I want to hear from you below on your tips to regain focus. You can share your thoughts by commenting below. Some of the greatest advice given here is not by me, but by you. With that said, here is what I have learned:

### 8 Steps to Help You Refocus

1. **Don't force it at first.** When you feel yourself losing focus, *stop*. Go for a walk. Call your spouse. Do anything other than sit or stand where you are. If you work all day on a computer, this is not the time to check personal email or read the news. Get away from your normal environment.
2. **Find your focus trigger.** [This post](#) shows you how.
3. **Get hydrated and fed.** If you are hungry, eat. If you are thirsty, drink. If you aren't thirsty, drink anyway. Stick to water or mildly caffeinated drinks (i.e. green tea). This isn't the time for a Starbucks double mocha grande that gives you instant diabetes. Eat low-glycemic foods. Make sure to eat and drink away from your normal work environment.
4. **Make a list.** When you go back to your desk, what are the top two (maybe three) things you need to accomplish? It's probably not checking your email. If it is checking your email, identify the emails that must be read and replied to and focus on those. Make sure to follow the [rules for not sucking at email](#), though.
5. **Remember your purpose.** Sometimes you have to remind yourself *why* you are doing what you are doing. In this reader's case, he might want to spend a few minutes reminding himself why he is in business. If you are working a job that you don't particularly love and find it

hard to focus because you are daydreaming about your dream job, remind yourself that this job pays for your home, food, etc. and that bonus you are chasing will be a blessing to your family.

6. **Eliminate clutter.** Clean your desk. Vacuum your office. Get things in order. This ties in with #7 and has a warning there.
7. **Rearrange.** Hang a picture. Move your desk. Change your music. Even something as simple as moving your computer monitors can help you focus upon return to your workspace. My warnings for #6 and #7, though, are to be sure to not make those your important tasks. Don't spend two hours cleaning, hanging and moving when you should be doing work that pays. Keep it simple here.
8. **Set a deadline.** You have one hour to complete a project. Go. You work better with a deadline, because you give yourself no choice but to focus. Make a game out of your deadlines and reward yourself for hitting them. If you hit them, you get the rest of the afternoon off. Odds are, without the deadlines, you would have taken all day to complete your tasks anyway, so don't feel guilty taking the time off.

*What would you tell this reader? How do you regain your focus?*