

## Eliminating Distractions

- Select an appropriate place to work:
  - Pay attention to lighting, temperature, furniture (don't read in bed), clothing, etc. You want to be comfortable, but not too comfortable.
  - Monitor your visual and auditory distractions, which might mean avoiding easy access to windows and doors. Practice not looking up when a door opens or when you hear voices. Earplugs may help.
  - Consider mixing up your locations, especially if you start to feel restless or unproductive.
  - Traveling a bit further than usual to your study destination sometimes helps. You made it all the way there, so you're less likely to give up and go home.
- Make it hard for others to disturb you:
  - Turn off your phone, put a "do not disturb" sign on your door, and alert your roommate(s) that you have work to do.
  - Schedule your social activities around your work plan; don't let unexpected interruptions throw you off track.
- Avoid the internet.
  - Try: leaving your charger at home, turning off/disabling your airport, or working in a public setting (where others can see your screen).
  - If the temptation is too high, try one of these: *Freedom*—For macs/pcs: locks your internet access for up to 8 hours and requires a reboot to get back online. Free trial or \$10. *Anti-Social*—Same idea, just for macs, only blocks social networking kinds of sites (but you can modify the list to reflect your trouble spots). Free trial or \$15.
- Manage your internal distractions:
  - Trust your plan. Remind yourself that you'll have time for everything else later, so you only need to focus on one thing right now.
  - If you're thinking about non-academic matters, making a quick list or jotting down some goals can help clear your mind.
  - If you're really stressing out, take a 5-10 minute break.
- Take care of yourself!
  - Get adequate rest. If you're falling asleep while you read, you're not being productive.
  - Get adequate exercise. If you're sluggish or antsy, it'll be harder to focus.
  - Get adequate nutrition. Brains need food!
  - Take short breaks. Walk around a little, stretch, or get a drink of water to stimulate blood circulation to your brain. Practice taking deep breaths using your diaphragm instead of your chest.
  - Give yourself rewards for time spent on task.