

# Developing Focus and Flow in School Studies

1. **Organize** your commitments by listing all assignment and test due dates starting with the earliest due.
2. **Simplify** complex papers or assignments into multiple simple tasks (“Projects”) For example, a project may require the tasks: identify resources or books and get them, read research materials, make reference cards, write first draft, etc.. Assign due dates to each action and allow plenty of time to do each task before the final project due date.
3. **Prioritize**. Review your list of individual actions and tasks that are part of a project and determine what must be done first and what can be done later to still meet the due date.



This brings peace and flow because you can focus on a task knowing that it is what you need to be doing now and that you have allotted time for other tasks to be completed on time. Stress comes when you have a lot of due dates but don't know what to do now or, while you are working, wonder if you should be doing something else!

## Create an Environment that Encourages Focused Effort

1. **Music**. Choose music without words or use a white noise (ocean waves) generator
2. **Restrict Interruption**. Turn off phone or silence it and put it in a drawer. Turn off social media. When you run into difficulty you will run to distraction. Put a “do not disturb” sign on your door.
3. **Focused Work**. Set a timer for a specific time (about 30-50 minutes) and do nothing but work on task #1 on your list.
4. **Break/Reward**. When the timer goes off, set another timer for 5-10 minutes. Stand up, stretch, and check social media or do whatever you want to do to relax.
5. **Resume**. Immediately when the timer goes off, reset the timer and either resume the task you were working on or start task #2 on the list. Continue until you have completed the tasks for today.



## Additional Suggestions

- ◆ **Don't work to perfection**. Get the assignment done so you have something to turn in. As you have time, refine it to make it higher quality. Your stress is reduced when you know you have something to turn in. Don't let “perfect become the enemy of good.”
- ◆ **Learn to scan reading material and note the important parts**. Most books are filler with nuggets of info.
- ◆ **Use vivid mental imagery to help you remember lists and associate terms and ideas**.
- ◆ **Eat and drink wisely**. Soft drinks and some foods will make you tired. Drink plenty of water and snack on nuts and fruits that give slow burn energy.