

Quick Guide: How to Ignore Workplace Distractions

Workplace distractions are par for the course and some of us are better at managing or ignoring them. If you are distracted by last minute requests, telephones, IM, other people's conversations, lift doors or noisy photocopiers, here are the **top ten tips** to help you ignore these workplace distractions:

- 1. Are these distractions an excuse** not to get the real work done? If you spend your day checking emails, planning and re-planning your day, you will more easily lose focus and allow yourself to be distracted. Consider your priorities.
- 2. Manage your time and space.** Set aside regular – routine – time for work that requires concentration, for example the first hour every day. You will soon get into the habit of concentrating when there is an end time to look forward to.
- 3. Take your work into a quiet space or meeting room** and leave your smartphone or tablet behind. Put a time limit on this time away or you will be distracted wondering how many emails are coming in.
- 4. Limit technology interruptions.** Turn off email notifiers, IM and text alerts and check these only at specified times. You may feel you will miss something, but you do need to balance this with getting the current job done, on time, and well.
- 5. Minimise visual distractions on your desk.** Especially, keep incoming work out of arm's reach so you physically have to shift your chair - and you - to reach it.
- 6. Wear your distraction radar hat!** Pick your top two distractions and keep them highest on your radar for at least two weeks. Resolve these distractions every time they occur. It will soon become habit, and you can move on to your next top ones.
- 7. Tell a friend.** If you are prone to self distraction, set up a designated check in time to assess progress. There's nothing like an upcoming visit to make you focus!
- 8. Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep makes you irritable and hinders your ability to focus.
- 9. Keep yourself busy.** Make time to reflect on what you have to achieve tomorrow, at the end of today. Write down your priorities and get straight on with them when you arrive. A tight schedule does wonders for being able to ignore distractions!
- 10. Aim for a feel good factor.** Don't beat yourself up for your lack of focus, or just because you're a naturally social or physically restless individual. Set yourself daily achievements: tasks that will give you that "I've done a good job here" feeling. This will help you increase your focus and reduce stress.

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