

# How Can You Be More Productive at Home or Work or When Studying?

Description

## Feeling Busy but Unproductive at Work or Home? What Does the Research Tell Us?

Do you ever find that at work and home you can be multi-tasking on a number of jobs and feel that nothing is being accomplished? These days, we end up playing with our children whilst updating our status. Children try to do their homework whilst flitting in and out of social media. So it's easier than ever to feel busy without actually being productive.

So what does the research tell us and how can we be more productive? The strategies here may be helpful.

Whilst it can seem efficient to do a lot of different tasks all at once, some recent studies show a number of negative effects such as:

- "High cognitive load" severely damages performance.
- Increasing the number of things we are focusing on can create a bottleneck in our attention which blocks us from being able to make decisions, make creative leaps and focus on the important things.
- Constant multi-tasking seems to be shrinking areas of the brain associated with cognitive and emotional control.

So if you are one of those multi-taskers who feel busy but unproductive, what can you do to accomplish activities with the singular focus they deserve.

- Focus on one thing at a time, it's as simple as that. Then, stop your mind from wandering.
- Think about your ability to carry out the task. For example are you likely to be a poor performer on this particular task or a strong performer. Research shows that poor performers on tasks show greater mind wandering when studying difficult work, while strong performers' minds wandered more while studying easier work.
- To sustain focus on a task, research has shown that you have to work on tasks that are not too easy for you and not too hard for you. A delicate balance has to be struck to find the right level of learning difficulty to reduce mind wandering and thereby increase learning.
- So for optimum learning, you have to find tasks with subject material at the right level of difficulty for you based on your particular expertise on the subject matter whether that involves writing a new business proposal, baking that perfect cake or producing that history homework.
- It is important to note that when the mind wanders, it does not necessarily mean that it is due to a lack of motivation, inability to learn or a concentration problem.
- It is therefore important to consider the difficulty of the 'to be learned' materials and your level of expertise in dealing with them as well as 'distractions you have in place', before jumping to any other conclusions.