



## **Strategies to restart your brain**

**Try these tips in any order to study and complete homework efficiently.**

**Tip #1: Pomodoro Timer** <http://www.marinaratimer.com/>

Set a timer for 25 minutes and work intently until the timer goes off. Give yourself a 5-minute brain break before working for another 25 minutes.

**Tip #2: No screens during break**

To really give your brain a break, don't look at any screens when you are taking a break from homework.

**Tip #3: Calm your brain**

Go out in nature or listen to a calming music track for 2 minutes.

**Tip #4: Create a To-Do List**

You can order this by shortest to longest, easiest to hardest, or hardest to easiest. Estimate how much time each task will take so you can go to bed at a reasonable time. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

**Tip #5: Prioritize**

Complete the homework that is due first. If you have a light homework day, be sure to look again on the Canvas calendar to see what you can work on now.

**Tip #6: Backwards Plan**

When you have a big assignment, break it into smaller tasks and complete a task a day. Don't leave it until the night before it's due!

**Tip #7: Disconnect from electronics**

Even if you are using your computer and phone timer for homework, turn off WiFi and close browsers so you are not distracted by the internet (see Tip #8).

**Tip #8: Use a scratch pad**

When something pops in your mind, such as "check the football game score," write it on a notepad to look up later when you have a scheduled break (see Tip #1).



**Mini Stress-Buster Tips**

Each of these fit in a short study break. In three minutes, you can try:

**Physical Stress Management:**

**1) Change your temperature**

Splash cold water on your face, use an ice pack, or go outside in the cold air for 30 seconds.

**2) Drink & Eat**

Your brain needs water and glucose to keep functioning. Drink 8 oz. of water and choose a protein & carbohydrate snack.

**3) Active Break**

Go outside and take a lap around your home or run up and down a flight of stairs.

**Mental / Emotional Stress Management:**

**1) Paced Breathing**

Slow your breathing. Close your eyes. Breathe from your belly, fully inflate and deflate your lungs. Focus on the feel of the fresh air and on the feeling of the breath.

**2) Thought-Busting**

To change how you feel, change how you think. Take the thought that is running through your brain when you feel stressed, look at it, challenge it, and replace it with something that is more realistic and present-focused.

**3) Orange Mindfulness**

Practice a mindfulness exercise of focused attention while eating an orange. This entails focusing on the task at hand without evaluation or cognition other than sensory. Try it: slowly peel an orange. Practice noticing something from each of your 5 senses as you peel the orange. Then do the same focused sensory attention while you slowly eat each separate segment. Do this for your homework snack. This works for chocolate, too.

**4) Peaceful imagery**

Imagine a peaceful memory or a peaceful place. Imagine what it looks like, sounds like, smells like, and how you feel. Imagine it until you feel peaceful. Before you begin a stressful challenge, such as a test, take a few seconds to remind yourself of that peaceful place.

**5) Five Senses Break:** Spend some moments to simply focus on one of your 5 senses.

Then proceed through the rest of your senses in turn: What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? How do you feel? What do you taste? This gives your brain a rest by refocusing your thoughts on your body.