

5 tips to avoid distractions at work

It can be tricky to stay focussed in a busy workplace. There are phone calls to take and emails to answer – not to mention the lure of a quick text or Snapchat to your friends. Small distractions can seem pretty harmless (after all, what's two minutes out of an eight hour day?) but frequent interruptions can wreak havoc on your productivity, and negatively impact the quality of your work.

Small distractions can seem pretty harmless (after all, what's two minutes out of an eight hour day?) but frequent interruptions can wreak havoc on your productivity, and negatively impact the quality of your work.

If you find yourself getting easily distracted by colleagues' conversations, people walking past your desk, or email alerts popping up on your screen, check out our top five tips to help you minimise disturbances and hone your focus.

1. **Work alongside productive people.** Focus can be contagious, so if possible, surround yourself with the most productive people in the workplace. Sitting next to or working alongside someone who knuckles down will not only inspire you to do the same, but will lessen your chance of being interrupted unnecessarily.
2. **Break tasks into chunks.** Large tasks can seem overwhelming, which can lead us to welcome interruptions, and reduce our productivity. If you split a project up into smaller tasks that require less time, you'll feel like the end goal is more achievable. Smaller tasks are generally easier to tackle – ensuring you're more likely to stay focussed on getting each mini-task achieved.
3. **Set boundaries with interrupting colleagues.** If you work alongside someone who is prone to distraction, try setting some boundaries so they know when you need to concentrate on the task at hand. You can tell someone you need to work on specific task politely without hurting their feelings. Let them know you'll be with them in just a few minutes to answer their question.
4. **Block online distractions.** If you find it difficult to avoid social media or your favourite blog, consider investing in one of the distraction-free apps available, such as Anti-Social or Concentrate. These will block you from specified sites for allocated periods of time.
5. **Make time for breaks.** It may seem counterintuitive to suggest regular breaks, but these are important to give your brain a rest, include social time in the day, and re-energise and

motivate yourself for the next task on your list.