

March 30th, 2023

How to Center Your Focus When Focusing is Difficult



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Objectives

1. Describe the process of attention
2. Learn one environmental modification to help with your attention and focus
3. Learn one applied strategy to help with your attention and focus





New Information

15 minutes



Writing Prompts

3 minutes



Take Breaks

2 minutes

Agenda

How to Center Your Focus When Focusing is Difficult

Quick Announcements

- You know yourself best
- Some of the strategies I discuss today may be helpful to you while others are not
- Use what will work best for you
- Self-reflection will be important for this presentation



Outline

- Background
 - What is attention?
 - Why do you have challenges with attention and focus?
 - What can you do to improve your overall attention and focus?
- Environmental Modifications
 - How can you modify your environment to improve your attention and focus?
- Applied Strategies
 - What strategies can you use in the moment to improve your attention and focus?
- Questions/Discussion



Background: What is attention?



Background

What is attention?

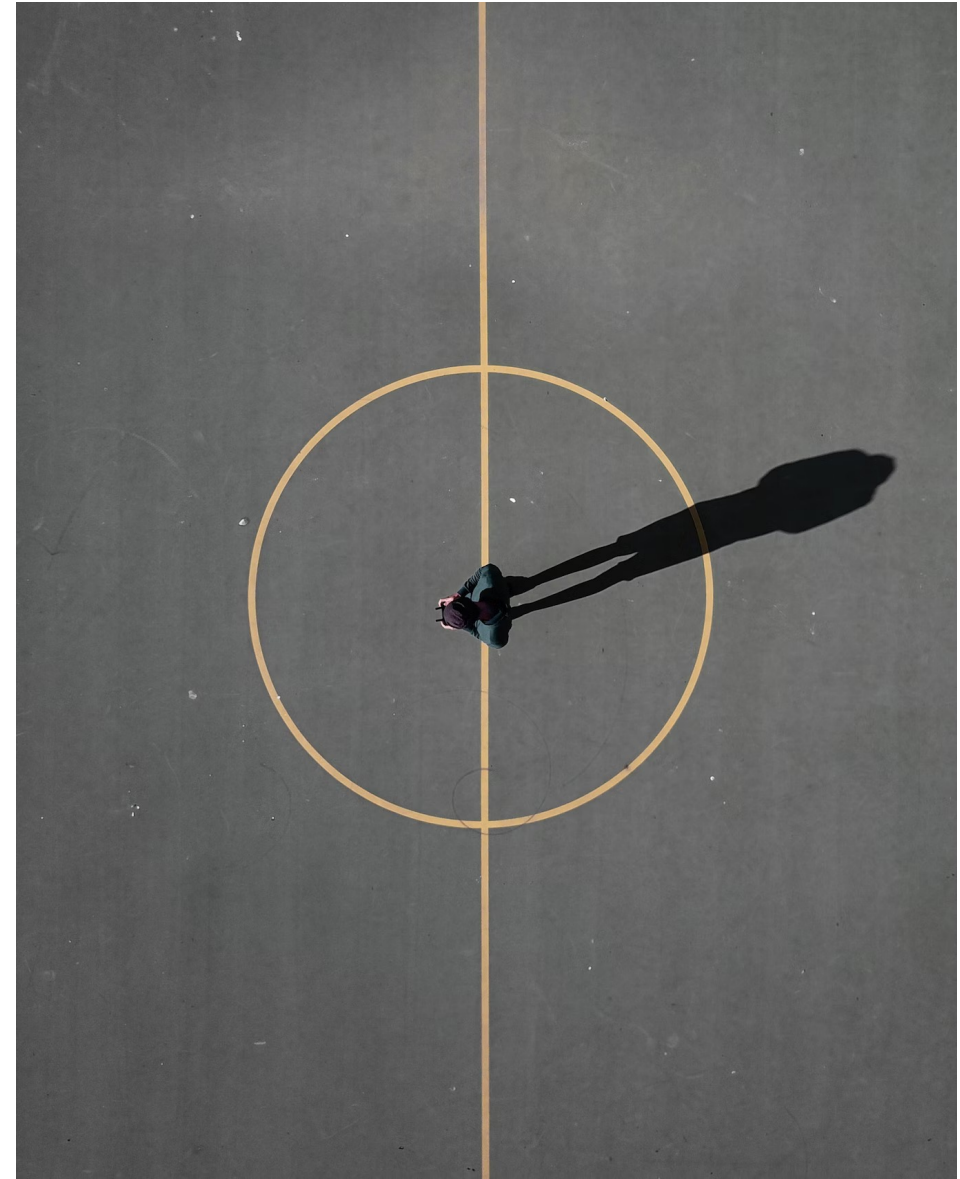


Background

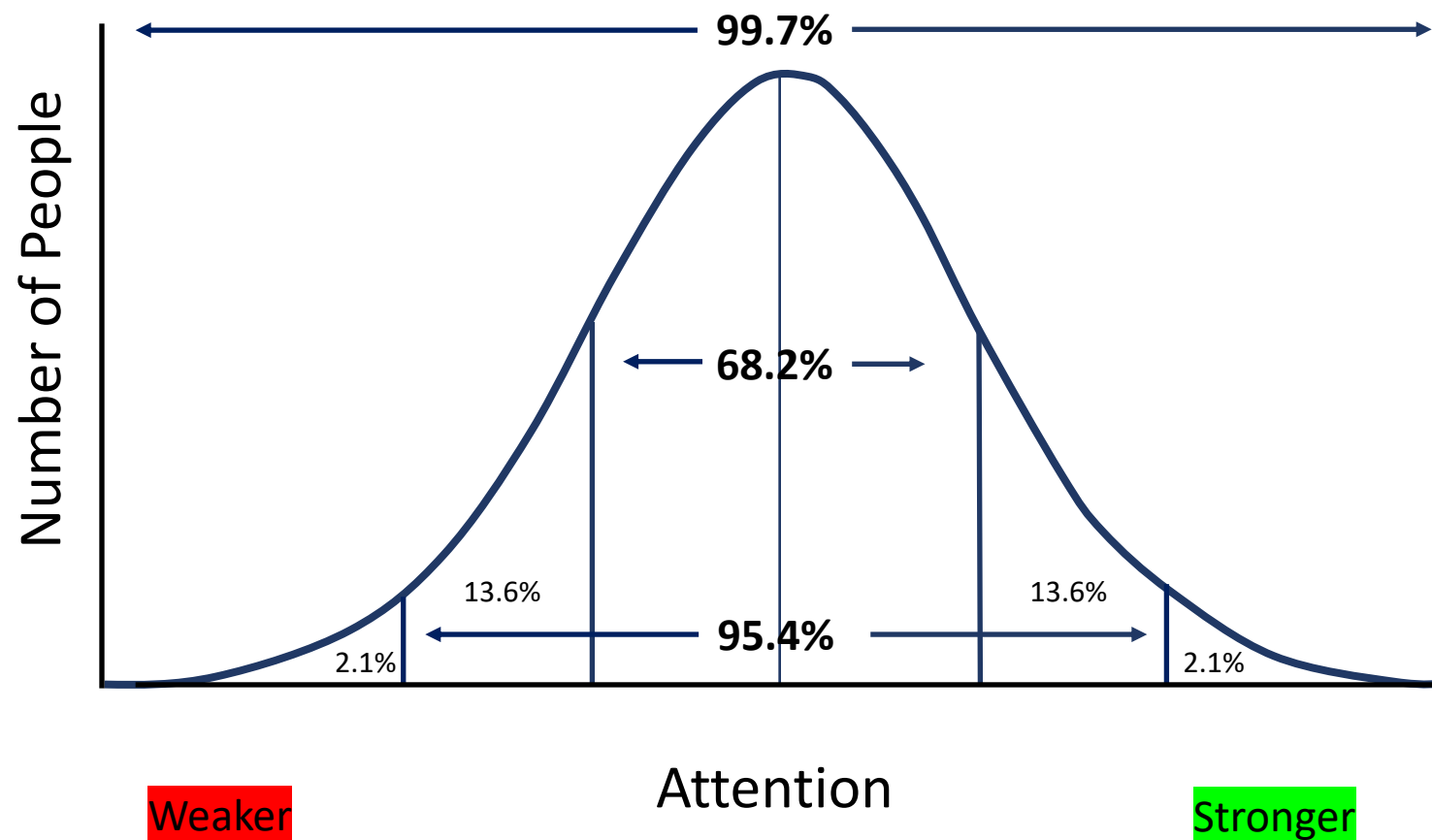
What is attention?

Attention is a two-part process:

1. To attend to a particular stimuli
2. To filter out environmental influences

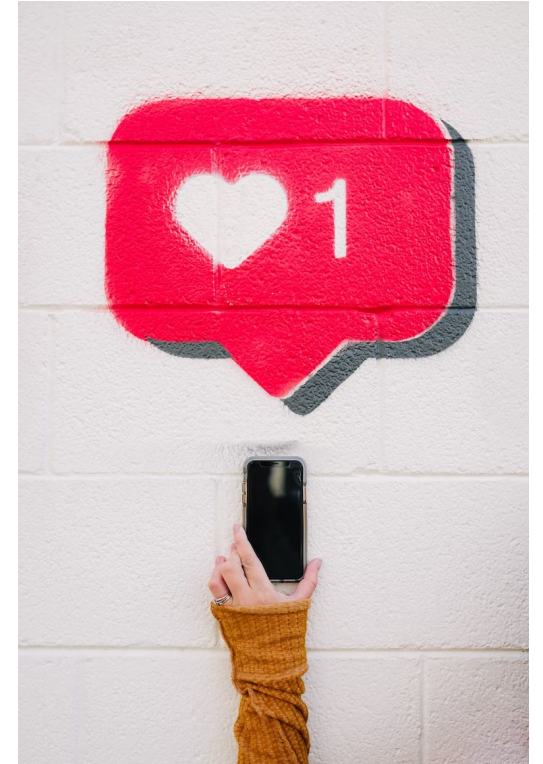


What is attention?



What is attention?

- Challenges with centering attention and focus is not new, but likely more difficult than ever
- Important to listen to your body
 - Challenges with attention and focus likely signal other needs





Background:
Why do you have challenges with
attention and focus?

Background

Why do you have challenges with attention and focus?

- Assignment/task is difficult
- Time/procrastination
- Distracted
- Multitasking



Background

Why do you have challenges with attention and focus?

- Hungry
- Tired
- Stressed
- Worried/Anxious
- Sad





Background:
What can you do to improve our
overall attention and focus?



Background

What can you do to improve our overall attention and focus?

- Eat healthy foods/stay hydrated
- Exercise
- Get adequate amounts of sleep
- Reduce stress and engage in enjoyable activities
- Reduce environmental distractions
- Build in strategies that can help in the moment

Background: Writing Prompt





Writing Prompt

How do you best center your focus?

- Where do you work?
 - Describe the environment
- Are you by yourself or with others?
- What time of day is it?
- How do you prefer to complete your tasks?

2

Background: Break



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Environmental Modifications:
How can you modify your
environment to improve your
attention and focus?

Environmental Modifications

How can you modify your environment to improve your attention and focus?

- Reduce distractions
 - Complete work in quiet settings
 - Turn off or limit access to electronics
 - Use do not disturb signs
 - Block calendar for times to complete assignments/tasks
 - If in class, sit near instructor



Environmental Modifications

How can you modify your environment to improve your attention and focus?

- Be comfortable, but not too comfortable
 - Use appropriate lighting
 - Use a flat table or desk
 - Space that's not too hot or cold
 - Refrain from favorite music or new songs
 - Have set times that you will start and stop studying





Environmental Modifications

How can you modify your environment to improve your attention and focus?

- Know yourself
 - Don't do what works for others, do what works for you
- Repeat successful settings that maximize attention and focus
 - Complete assignments/tasks in the same setting around the same time of day, day after day

Environmental Modifications: Writing Prompt





Writing Prompt

Describe one strategy that you can use to modify your environment to improve your attention and focus

- How do you plan to implement this strategy?
- Why is this the strategy that will be most helpful for you?



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Environmental Modifications: Break



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Applied Strategies:
What strategies can you use in the
moment to improve your attention
and focus?

What strategies can you use in the moment to improve your attention and focus?

- Set deadlines and pace yourself
 - Create realistic expectations
- Allocate additional time
 - Set aside time to double-check assignments/tasks for careless mistakes
- Create rewards for effort
 - Premack Principle



What strategies can you use in the moment to improve your attention and focus?

- Divide assignments/tasks
 - Divide into smaller components and then complete one at a time
- Take breaks/use timers
 - Build in short and frequent breaks
 - Pomodoro Method
 - 25 minutes on, 5 minutes off; break for 15 minutes after three cycles



What strategies can you use in the moment to improve your attention and focus?

- Ask for help
 - Reach out to others who can help you with difficult assignments/tasks
- Organization
 - Set up office space, desk, or work area so that it is organized
 - Use assignment/task bin



What strategies can you use in the moment to maximize attention and focus?

- Additional Strategies
 - Develop strategies that work for you
 - Highlight important information as you read
 - Listen to audio books as you read
 - Watch online tutorials
 - Distraction free products





Applied Strategies

What strategies can you use in the moment to center attention and focus?

- Know yourself
 - Do what works best for you, not what works best for others
- Repeat successful strategies that help center attention and focus
 - Be flexible as different strategies will be more successful than others for particular tasks/assignments

Applied Strategies: Writing Prompt





Writing Prompt

Describe one applied strategy that you can use to improve your attention and focus

- How do you plan to implement this strategy?
- Why is this the strategy that will be most helpful for you?



2

Applied Strategies: Break



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Questions/Discussion