

SINGLE-TASKING

Daily Activities



**"In an age of distraction,
nothing is so luxurious as paying attention."**

PICO IYER

There's rarely a moment in the day when our attention isn't being pulled in multiple directions - from advertising, smart phones, and the news to our kids/spouses, work, and even our own minds! The ability to multitask can be a wonderful skill, but for many it's an unconscious habit that erodes our ability to be fully present, connected to our lives, and effective in our work. Research shows that when we multitask, we're likely to make 30% more errors and take twice as long to complete tasks. Multitasking also contributes to increased stress levels and burnout.

Mindfulness is a powerful antidote to distraction and **presence is a skill we can develop through the intentional practice of SINGLE-TASKING** - paying attention to one thing at a time. Try out the ideas below and explore how single-tasking can help you feel calmer, more focused, and far more fulfilled. Practicing with routine daily activities will directly translate to greater presence in your work and projects as well.



WASHING YOUR HANDS

Each time you wash your hands, feel the temperature or smoothness of the water. Can you smell the soap? Does the drying towel have texture?



EATING MEALS/SNACKS

Look at your food - notice the colors, textures, shapes. Feel the weight of your silverware. Chew slowly and take in all of the flavors and sounds.



WALKING

Every time you get up from your desk or walk somewhere, see if you can feel the bottoms of your feet or the sensations of your legs/arms moving.



DRIVING

Explore being present with the sensations of driving. What does the wheel feel like in your hands? What sounds can you hear? What do you see? Is there a hum of movement in your body as the car rolls along?



SIPPING COFFEE/TEA

Feel the warmth or texture of your cup in your hands. Notice its shape. Is there steam rising off the top? Smells? Can you fully taste the coffee or tea? Even one or two sips?



BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

What sounds do you hear? What are the sensations of the bristles on your gums? Can you smell the toothpaste? What else do you notice?



SINGLE-TASKING

Focus Blocks



One of the most effective ways to bring the strategy of single-tasking into your work is through Focus Blocks. Focus blocks help optimize your time and mental energy and give you **permission to focus on one thing at a time** so you can work more deeply and with far less stress.

If you work in a busy office space, you could make small "Focus Block" signs for each other so that you can be mindful of unnecessary interruptions.



Get Present



Choose a single focus: **WRITE IT DOWN**



Close, minimize, or silence everything else
(programs, browsers, notifications, your phone, etc)



Set a timer for an appropriate amount of time



When a distraction pops up, **PAUSE + OBSERVE:**
"Is this something I must respond to?"



CHOOSE Wisely: recommit to your focus OR deal with the distraction,
then return to your focus as soon as possible

