

Staying awake during your (home) work

Is the attention waning a bit? You sit with your head in your hands staring at the ceiling, thinking about what you're going to eat tonight or how you're going to plan your birthday. Multiple attempts to return to work have already failed? Fear not, you can really do something about it!

The body sometimes needs a little extra to convince it that it needs to continue working. There are several ways you can help your body with that. Some of these strategies will probably work in your situation:

Underresponsive and doing homework or working

- First practice on your saxophone for 15 minutes, jump on the trampoline or cycle around. It should not take too long, because then you will become too tired to concentrate.
- Make sure there is a good balance between sitting still and moving. You should have enough times a week to exercise and exercise. These activities support the moments when you have to sit still for quite a long time, such as while doing homework or working.
- Try not to miss out on sports. Moving less makes it harder for you to concentrate on (home) work.
- Listen to music during certain types of work, try out where it is supportive. Choose music that you know inside out and that doesn't have too many tempo changes that can be distracting.
- Eat crunchy snacks in between, which contain little or no sugar. (Sugar makes you drowsy – after a short revival). Think of carrots, apple, nuts and crackers. Fresh and crunchy food activates and also a lot of chewing, such as with sugar-free chewing gum or dried mango.
- Drink water with lemon or lime in it, sour lemonade (without sugar) or ice water. That gives a boost. Drinking through a straw activates even more.
- Do you need to get something in your head, lists or a speech that you need to remember? Then learn it while moving. For example, your child can stamp rows or math tables while standing or jumping, or throw a ball at the same time.
- Walk back and forth while reciting the material aloud.
- Change your position when you have been sitting for a while:
 - standing at the counter or a high table to write something
 - lying on your stomach and leaning on your elbows to read something
 - walking back and forth; anything but slumped in bed, on the couch, or in a hammock.
- Do your (home) work in the kitchen or living room if you can concentrate better in a busier environment.
- See what you can fiddle with while watching, listening or reading. For example a string, lace, rubber band or paper clip: something that does not distract from the work.
- Bite something while working. There are specially made chewing materials available for this. See chapter 12 on resources.
- Plan your (home) work and make sure you alternate between types of work (reading emails, writing a report, consulting, making assignments, reading, learning, punching in rows). Help your child plan.
- Learn to schedule breaks and move during those breaks.

- Install the f.lux app (justgetflux.com) when you work behind the computer; this allows the light from your computer to adjust to the time of day, making your eyes less tired from looking at the screen.

Overresponsive and doing homework or working

- Take a few deep breaths in and out regularly, for example before each new task.
- Have a cup of tea before going to work.
- Make sure you have eaten enough so that hunger does not distract you. But not too much, because a full stomach makes it harder to concentrate.
- Learn to schedule breaks and relax during those breaks by taking a short walk or having a drink.
- Listen to calm music (via earplugs) when noises are disturbing.
- Clear the table so you don't get distracted.
- Try which view helps best, a dull wall or perhaps the view to the garden or the street.
- Do your (home)work in the same place as much as possible.
- Choose a room where you can be alone, or make agreements with roommates about a time where there is no talking and minimal walking back and forth.

If you have any questions, tips or ideas about staying alert during your (home) work, you can email us at monique@dutchsensorysolutions.nl.

Kind Regards,
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