



LNP 309

How to Stay Focused

In LNP 308, Nurse Sharon Weinstein described how she got to the breaking point when she had to miss an important family event while she was caught overseas.

Sharon developed techniques to achieve life balance. In this podcast, I will concentrate on one aspect of being balanced: being able to stay focused.

This is Pat Iyer with Iyer's insights, one of the twice weekly shows of Legal Nurse Podcast. The strategies for becoming more focused are endless:

- Make lists.
- Remove distractions.
- Set up your ideal environment.

You need to find what works best for your style of working.

Exercises to Improve Focus

When TV newscaster Diane Sawyer was asked the secret to her success, she said, "I think the one lesson I've learned is there is no substitute for paying attention."

Our legal nurse consulting skills are built on our ability to focus. You know the feeling when you dive into a pile of medical records and get so immersed that you resent a distraction? You feel like someone grabbed you by the back of the neck to pull you away.

But sometimes it is difficult to get focused.

Did you know improving your focus can be done with different types of simple exercises? It's true. Something as simple as getting exercise on a daily basis or chewing gum can improve your brain function, which leads to better focus. Most of the time, focus exercises take less than ten minutes to do.

Check out these to get you started:

- Mutter to yourself. It might seem like you're crazy but talking to yourself either out loud or not, helps you pay attention, calms you emotionally and tells you to act.

- Trade your caffeine for cardio. Caffeine gives you a boost, which makes it easier to concentrate. But you might find it harder to focus when you're not buzzed. A better way to keep your mind stimulated is with physical exercise. Exercise triggers the release of chemicals in the brain that affect our learning and memory, which in the end are what help us focus.
- Drink more water. Mild dehydration can lead to distraction. Being even as little as 2 percent dehydrated can affect your ability to concentrate on cognitive activities.
- Get plenty of shut-eye. Getting at least seven hours of good quality sleep each night helps your body and mind rejuvenate and leads to better concentration and focus during the day.

Here are some Concentration exercises taken from the Success Consciousness website.

Exercise 1

Count the words in any paragraph from a book. Count them again. Repeat until it's easy.

Now count the words in two paragraphs. Repeat until it becomes easy.

Finally count all the words on the page. Count mentally and with your eyes only. Don't use your finger to point to each word.

Exercise 2

Count from one hundred backwards to one.

Exercise 3

Count backwards from one hundred, by threes, for example 100, 97, 94 and so on. I know, it reminds you of asking people to count backwards from 100, subtracting 7 each time.

Exercise 4

Pick an inspiring word or simple sound. Repeat it silently for five minutes. When this becomes easy, try doing it for ten minutes continually.

Exercise 5

Hold a piece of fruit in your hands. Examine it, keeping your entire attention focused on the fruit. Just focus on the fruit, ignoring other thoughts. Examine its shape, the smell of it, it's texture when you touch it and how it tastes.

Exercise 6

Visualize a piece of fruit. First examine a piece of fruit for 2 minutes. Then close your eyes and visualize how it feels, looks and smells. Try to visualize a clear image. If the image gets blurry, look at the fruit again for a few seconds then close your eyes and try to visualize it again.

It's never been harder to stay focused than at this time in history. We are distracted by technology and everything happening around us. You can regain focus though by doing different exercises that can help you build your concentration.

This is Pat Iyer. Before we continue with the show, I want to share a source of great information about stress management. I talk to too many LNCs who work all the time, are exhausted, and afraid of getting burned out.

I need to ask *you* a few questions.

Do you think of yourself as a strong, capable person?

Do you think you are above average in your ability to handle a crisis?

Do you think you can keep working through tension and stress?

So did Aila Accad. One day **this masters prepared nurse found** herself curled up on her sofa with a blanket over her head, trying to escape her crisis. Has this ever happened to you too?

Aila learned how to reduce her tension, lose weight, make better choices and love herself with the techniques she will share in this program called **Instant Stress Busters**.

In this program you will discover how to instantly reduce your anxiety and think more clearly when tension rises. You can get the audio recording of this training and the transcript at the link in the show notes for podcast.legalnursebusiness.com or on our new mobile app, Biz.edu. You can download the app at



legalnursebusiness.com/bizedu, and then use that to access our podcasts, blogs, videos, courses, free reports and other great content. The link to get the app is legalnursebusiness.com/bizedu.

Get Aila's training today at the show notes for this podcast at podcast.legalnursebusiness.com or on the app's show notes. Click on the "learn more" button. You'll receive a 25% discount for the training when you use the code "Listened" in the coupon box for the shopping cart. Start today using new techniques to reduce anxiety and tension.

Let's go back to the show.

How to deal with focus issues

You probably already know how hard it is to focus on something. Focus issues are often the result of different things like boredom, lack of interest or even fatigue.

Concentration can often be attributed by how motivated and interested we are in the task.

There are ways to deal with focus issues.

Supplements can help you when you are having focus issues. Vitamins like the B complex group, Biotin and lecithin all help improve your memory.

Eating the right foods can help you better focus as well since you will be getting the supplements from the foods to help with brain health. Eat whole foods, not packaged ones, whenever possible.

Consult with your physician if you find you can't focus on any one thing for any length of time. Lack of focus can be a symptom of several different conditions, including depression. Get a thorough checkup to rule out any physical causes of your lack of focus issues.

When working on projects on your computer and online, make sure you only have tabs open that are relevant to what you are doing. This keeps you from getting distracted by all that fun information floating around the Internet.

Make your tasks routine. Set up a routine for tasks that you do every day. For example, check your email and social media at the same time every day. Just like you probably have a routine when you wake up, you should also have a routine when working.

Separate your day into a time for creating, time for work and communication, and time for yourself. Split the day up in whatever way works best for you.

Dealing with focus issues causes your productivity to drop. By learning how to take care of your focus issues through your diet, exercise and routines, you can be more productive.

Applied Focus

You can increase your productivity and accomplish more in less time by using a technique called applied focus. Applied focus can help you avoid the little distractions that can derail your efforts at productivity.

How applied focus increases productivity

Applied focus is a strategy that helps you multiply your productivity. Each session is 45 minutes long, with a 15 minute shift in focus. Or you can do 90 minutes followed by 30 minute shift in focus. In other words, you stop focusing intentionally on your task and do something completely different in the shift focus period. During the focused session, though, you don't allow anything to distract you (except a dire emergency). Phone calls are out, email is off, texting and Facebook are off limits.

Here are some guidelines (be sure to adjust them as necessary to fit your individual situation):

1. Open only one browser or application window at a time. So if you're writing a blog post, only your word processor or text pad is open.
2. Keep your sessions timed. Don't go past your 45 or 90 minute session, no matter how focused you are. You need the break.
3. Get away from your task. Get up from your desk, walk around, get a drink or snack. Give your mind a break.

4. Be prepared ahead of time. Do your research during a different applied focus session then from the writing session. That way you're able to concentrate on the writing alone.

5. Have a session set up for email, telephone and social media time.

Applied focus sessions can increase your productivity but it will take some getting used to. Start slowly by scheduling one or two sessions a day. Once you become used to the routine, you will notice an improvement in your concentration and productivity.

What's next?

Learning how to focus on one task at a time takes time and commitment. In our busy lives we are pulled in many directions at one time. It's best to begin your journey on a more focused life gradually by implementing the tips and strategies found within this report.

Focus is such an important part of how productive you are. If you can focus on one task for a set amount of time you will be more productive in a shorter amount of time than you have been. Putting aside your tendency to multitask will improve your productivity as well, since you will be able to finish one task before you move on.

Removing distractions can help you focus as well. Create an environment that you feel comfortable in, and that fits with how you work. If you're a morning person, then focus on your work tasks, and vice versa for night owls.

Eat healthy and nutritious foods to keep your brain strong and able to concentrate. Exercise daily, meditate daily and take time to enjoy nature and your family.

Pat Iyer again with one last mention of **Instant Stress Busters**, the training that shares methods to handle your stress so that you can have a correct work life balance. You'll be able to order this using the "learn more" button in the show notes for this podcast at podcast.legalnursebusiness.com. Or if you are listening to our podcast using our new mobile app, called biz.edu, you'll see the show notes on your phone. Get our app at legalnursebusiness.com/bizedu.

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Talk to you next week with a new show.

I've got a phenomenal resource for you just waiting on LegalNurseBusiness.com. My online training and books are designed to help LNCs discover ways to strengthen their skills and businesses. Check them out at legalnursebusiness.com.

Many of us are lifelong learners who enjoy the chance to keep expanding our knowledge. Just like the book of the month clubs, LNCEU.com gives you two online trainings every month. We have a yearly payment plan that saves you over \$50 compared to paying monthly, and each program is hugely discounted. Look at the options at LNCEU.com.

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