

# [Multitasking makes you lose focus](https://assignbuster.com/multitasking-makes-you-lose-focus/)

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## Playing Tennis With Three Tennis Balls

Most people like to listen to music or talk on the phone while they are working on something. According to this article “ Multitasking Can Make You Lose… Um… Focus” by Alina Tugend, multitasking does not make life easier. In her article she states that multiple reliable sources are agreeing that multitasking can cause more harm than good in most cases. Multitasking can cause you to lose more time than you gain, increase stress, and can cause you to not do your best or make errors. She starts with evidence from psychiatrist Edward M. Hallowell who states, “ you sacrifice focus when you multitask.” He also says “ Multitasking is shifting focus between tasks, it gives the illusion of simultaneous tasking, but you’re really not. It’s like trying to play tennis with three tennis balls.”

## Your Attention Cannot Be Devided

Despite what most assume you cannot do multiple things at once, say for example, text and talk on the phone at the same time. Trying to do both can cause you to forget what the person said or what your text was about, you cannot divide your attention. Your attention can only go back and forth between the two. We now have smartphones which makes it even more tempting to try and multitask. “ Several decades ago, when a desk worker had a typewriter, a phone and an occasional colleague who dropped into the office” states Tugend. Before cell phones and cordless phones, phones were not mobile. This meant you were not able to be active with other things you had to sit and not be focused on anything but your conversation.

In the present people feel it is necessary to do more and more things in a shorter period of time. Tugend says “ researchers are trying to figure out how the brain changes attention from one subject to another.” In her article she writes about Earl Miller, the Picower professor of neuroscience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who claims, “ The human brain has a very large prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain contains the executive control process. This is what helps us to switch and prioritize our tasks. The prefrontal cortex in humans is about one third of the entire cortex.” Studies have been conducted by Professor Miller and they showed that the brain only focused on one or two items at a time when shown multiple visual stimulants. This better helps prove Tugends claim because it gives evidence of how the human brain works.

## Slowing Down Reaction

As normal everyday people we think if we can do two things at once like driving and putting on makeup we’re saving time and that as long as we’re paying attention it is acceptable. This article brings up David E. Meyer, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and his colleagues who studied young adults as they performed different tasks. They discovered that people lost time when moving back and forth between these different tasks. It may only take our brain a few seconds or less to switch between objectives, but the seconds add up. If you are focused on applying makeup and not the road for even a second, it will still slow down your reaction time if something suddenly happened.

## Interruptions

It would be nice to not be interrupted when engaging in a task, but the real world does not work that way. We are constantly being interrupted. In her research Tugend found a study that stated “ people were interrupted and moved from one project to another about every 11 minutes. And each time, it took about 25 minutes to circle back to that same project.” Another study found that “ people actually work faster in conditions where they are interrupted, but they produce less.” They found that after only 20 minutes of interrupted performance things like stress levels and frustration were increased.

## Constant Panic and Guilt

Checking our phones every 20 seconds has become a part of our daily lives. It has started to distract us from the other tasks we need to do. Dr. Hallowell says, ” Desperately trying to keep up with multiple jobs, we feel a constant low level of panic and guilt.” He also says, “ Despite our belief that we cannot control how much we are overloaded, we can.” “ This means turning off our cell phones and trying not to check them every 20 minutes.” not Sleeping to get more work done is a bad strategy. Our bodies are only able to function well when we get enough sleep, have a healthy diet, and exercise.

Multitasking has become like a second nature to society these days. It does not help, it only makes you slower in completing tasks. If people would sit back and relax when having a phone conversation, they would notice how much easier it is to focus on the person they are talking to. In this day in age people are so caught up in trying to get everything done at one time they do not realise they are neglecting the conversation they are having, which means they aren’t fully aware of what is being said and the responses come slower.

## Conclusion

Tugend ends her article by stating “ you, too, can learn the art of single-tasking.” If you focus on one task at a time you can learn how to single-task. Most would choose to not single task because they think multitasking is getting more than one job done faster, but in reality it is not. If people would stop trying to do more than one task at a time they would notice how much faster doing one task can be. Start a task, finish it, move on to the next. This will cut time out from having to go back and forth between the tasks. Switching between tasks can also lead to mistakes in the tasks you are trying to achieve.

Multitasking, in conclusion from the argument and evidence given in this article, is not the answer. It does not help you accomplish goals faster or more efficiently.