4 Reasons Why You Get More Distracted With ADHD

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ADHD and Distractions

With contributions from Alex B.

Do you want to know the four real reasons why you get distracted because of your ADHD? Of course you do! So brace yourself. The truth I'm about to reveal will set you free while taking you down an unforgiving path.

Disclaimer: This article is written for ADHDers by an ADHDer. If you don't have ADHD, you read this at your own peril. When I refer to "us" or "we," I'm referring to everyone with ADHD.

I wish I could tell you the reason why you get distracted is because of TV, social media, or your phone. However, we won't though because we're in this together. And we won't lie to you.

It's true that distractibility is much more common for ADHDers. We get so into life that we forget about our responsibilities, our hopes, even our dreams.

So the question is, why?

ADHD and Distractions: Why Curiosity, Challenges, Urgency, and Interesting Things Distract You

What if we told you this heading contains the four reasons why you get distracted?

We'll explain everything after we educate you on the medical science behind ADHD. However, this knowledge is essential to your happiness and success!

We have a shortage of a chemical called dopamine. Anytime you do something enjoyable, and your brain releases dopamine. It makes you feel good. Dopamine also helps you focus, control your attention, and even elevates your critical thinking abilities. Yes, that's right, dopamine is the best thing that can ever happen to you.

Too bad we have a shortage of it due to our ADHD. This shortage causes us to have a crappy executive function, which means we're not good at carrying out a mundane task on time or in the right way.

Depending on who you are as an individual, certain activities and circumstances can produce huge amounts of dopamine. That dopamine lets you thrive and achieve success.

While that last sentence can apply to anyone, it's life-changing for ADHDers. There are four elements:

- Curiosity
- Challenge
- Urgency

- Interest

We have no idea what you like or do for fun. But we guarantee one of these elements is involved. And when you find yourself distracted, none of these four elements are involved before you got distracted.

So the reason you get distracted isn't because you have ADHD. It's because you're not feeling curious. You feel unchallenged. You don't feel a sense of urgency. You have little to no interest in the task at hand.

Let us put everything we just said into a hypothetical scenario:

1. You are doing something that is boring, uninteresting, not urgent, not challenging.
2. You encounter or notice something that makes you curious, is urgent, is challenging, or interest you.
3. You get distracted.
4. You realize you got distracted.

When you encounter or notice something that does involve one of the four elements while doing something boring, you get distracted. To sum up this entire section in one sentence: The real reason why ADHDers get distracted is because we're doing something boring.

Next page: The steps to eliminating distractions with ADHD

ADHD and Distractions: How to Eliminate Distractions With ADHD

ADHD compels you to seek out places where you thrive. There's no way around it. You were born for this.

Turn Off All Electronics

To begin with, I suggest getting rid of your TV and deleting all your social media. These are distractions from life and will prevent you from discovering where you thrive.

A note from Alex: I did this about two years ago, and I have no regrets. Social media was a distraction and would trigger my anxiety. As for TV, once you find out where you thrive, you'll always have something better to do.

Become a One Track Mind

State the task at hand out loud. Such as, "I will write my article on how to avoid and/or block out distractions, and I'll get it done tonight." Repeat it a couple of times. I've found that verbalizing my intent aloud sets my mind to thinking in that particular direction, as well as helping to deflect some incoming distractions.

If you cohabitate with another, who's well acquainted with ADHD, their hearing you state your intentions will inform them of your plans, so they know not to bother you. If they are new to your diagnosis, it may lead them to the conclusion that you're slightly loony-bin-bound and they'll leave you alone.

Either way, you'll be able to be undisturbed for several hours, and you can always explain the Distraction-Be-Gone ritual later.

Set a Timer

Work in increments. If noise is a distraction to you, as it is for me, set the timer on your cell or laptop – one that doesn't tick or make noise until your time is up. I (usually) use the vibration mode on my cell. Whether I'm doing something physical or sitting and typing, it doesn't fail to catch my attention. When the time is up, it's up. I take a break whether I want to or not and then I return.

Doing this takes willpower and a lot of it. I know how tough it is, especially if you happen to be hyperfocused and really in the moment, but taking a break will help you to finish what you've started, rather than burn up before it's done.

That's the goal, right? To get it done the first time. If you're in the middle of it and don't want to forget – make a note of where you left off, then get up and walk away. Even if it's just for a moment. It does make a big difference.

Soundproof Yourself

If listening to favorite music doesn't help, have you tried earplugs or white noise? Both options are generally accepted within the office setting.

Earplugs cost very little; you can find them in the nearest drugstore and hardware store. They don't drown out everything but can help reduce enough noise to maintain your focus. However, it's important to note that using earplugs while driving is not a good thing – please do not try this.

There are plenty of white noise machines out on the market, but I manufacture my own just by turning on a desk fan. If all else fails, try closing your door. If you have a cubicle, you can try asking your boss to move to one located further back and away from the main flow of traffic, if the movement is impeding your focus.

Conclusion

There is no cure-all that I'm aware of, no fail-safe method that I've found – but the three steps above have yielded the best results for me. I am always open to suggestions though; I would love to hear what has helped you block out distractions with ADHD.