

Our brains are wired to be **mono-taskers, not multi-taskers.**

The mental toll of multi-tasking

Multi-tasking is a myth.

The reality is that we are more likely to be task-switching from one thing to another.

Multi-taskers have more trouble organising their thoughts and filtering out irrelevant information.

Task-switching leads to people:

- 🔗 Making more mistakes
- 🔗 Reducing our memory capacity
- 🔗 Feeling more stressed
- 🔗 Getting muddled in our thinking

Coach yourself questions

How could you design your working week to work better for your brain?

What would be the biggest benefits of mono-tasking for you at work?

Ideas for action



1. Carry out an interruption audit

Become more aware of **what / when / why** you're most likely to multitask. Ask yourself:

- 🔗 When do I switch the most at work?
- 🔗 When was the last time I worked for 1hr without being interrupted?



2. Try to mindfully monotask

Allocate time in your diary to **do one thing at once**. Instead of task-switching, the aim is to **use task-sequencing** where you start and finish a task before you move on to the next.

- 🔗 How could you make mindful mono-tasking work with your diary?
- 🔗 How can you communicate it to others?



3. Win - watch

Not all work is equal. It's important to not lose sight of the bigger things that need to get done. Creating a **list of wins to work towards** will keep you committed.

- 🔗 Every quarter, visualise the wins you want to achieve. Keep it visible on your desk/desktop.



4. Game your brain

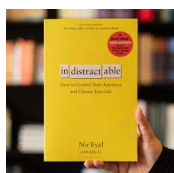
Turn a 'big' piece of work (e.g. *researching a report*) into a series of 30-minute sprints. Write down your sprints on a piece of paper. **Each time you complete a sprint, mark it off and create a reward**. **By gamifying your progress, you keep yourself motivated.**



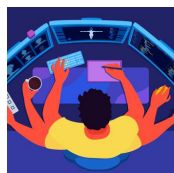
5. Find a progress pair

If there is something important that you want to work on, find someone to do it with. **If you can work together in person on the project, even better**. If not, keep the camera on when you are working virtually. **Being visible will help you to stay present and indistractable.**

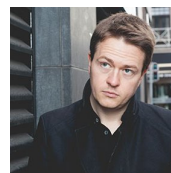
Recommended resources



Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life
Nir Eyal's videobook



Why multitasking does more harm than good
Wu Tsai
Neurosciences Institute, Stamford University



How to find focus and increase your attention
Author of *Stolen Focus*, Johann Hari explores how we can take back control of finding our focus at work on Squiggly Careers #264