



Concentration
Techniques
and
Mindfulness
for

FOCUS

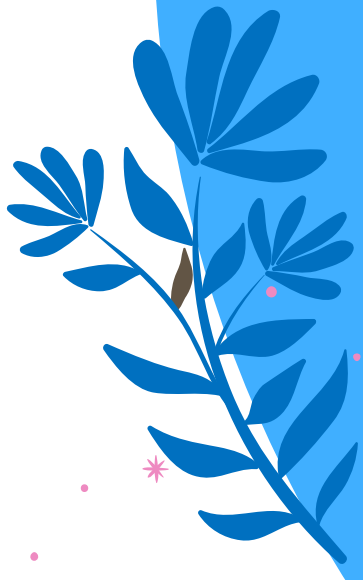
Sarah Myhill

Concentration is key to academic success

“Concentration is the ability to focus your attention on a single thought, idea, or action, as critical as this skill is, it is one of the most difficult to develop.”

Kam Knight (2019)

Concentration is a critical skill for a student, without it, you are not able to start, stick with, or finish a task or an assignment



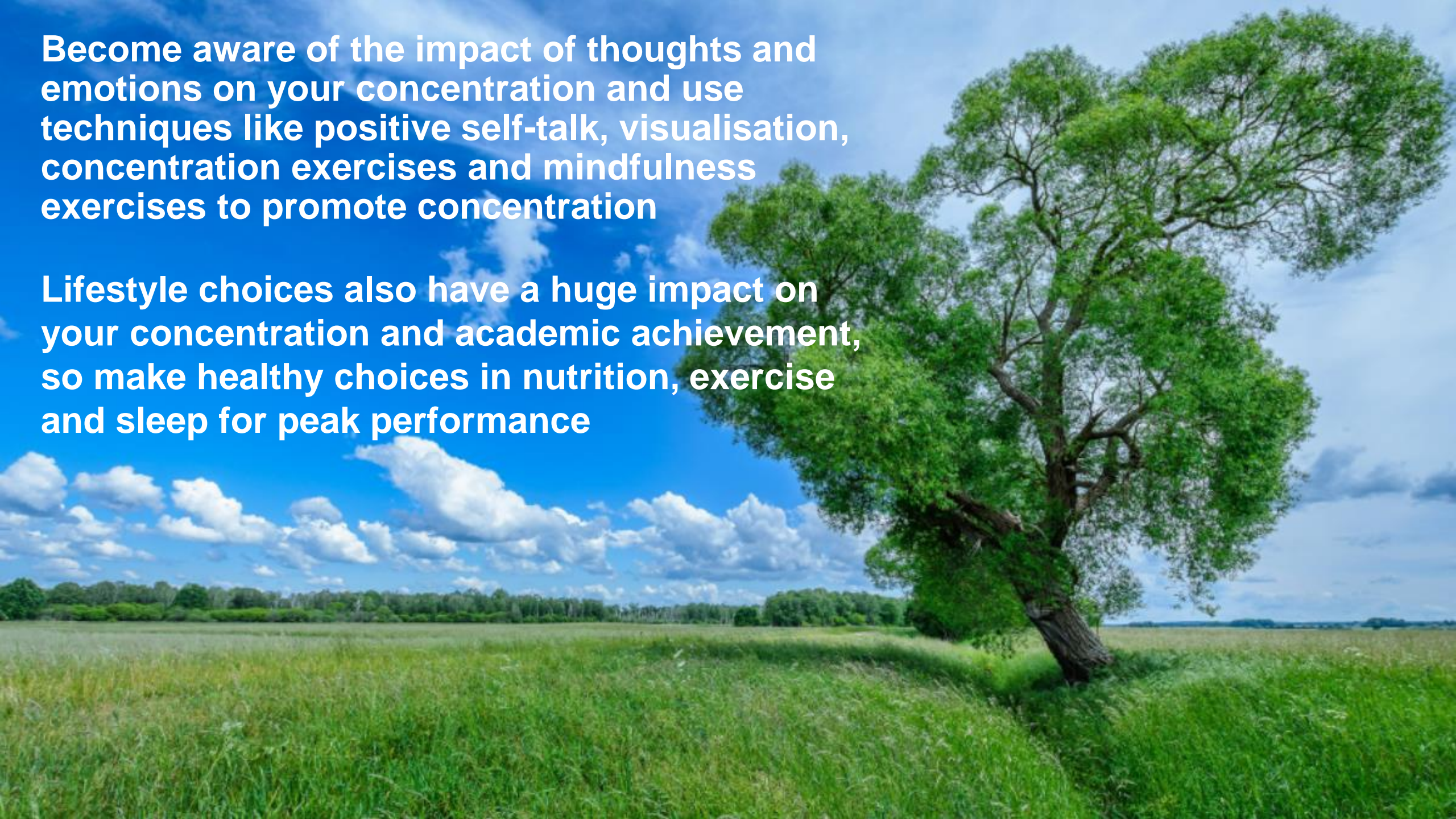


The unrelenting noise of the way we live now is eroding our attention:

- **technology and social media – manipulating us**
- **economic growth – living faster**
- **constant switching between tasks – every 3 minutes**
- **less sleep – under-slept and over-tasked**
- **sedentary indoor lifestyles**
- **lack of reading – reduced empathy**
- **no space for mind to roam**
- **lack of unsupervised play for children**
- **bad diets - processed foods**
- **pollution**

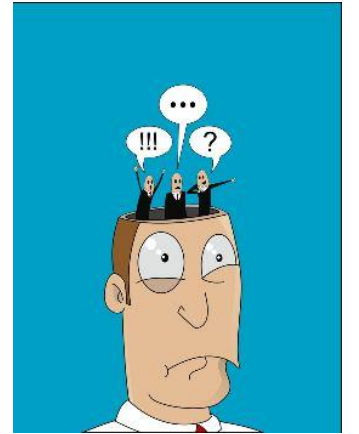
Become aware of the impact of thoughts and emotions on your concentration and use techniques like positive self-talk, visualisation, concentration exercises and mindfulness exercises to promote concentration

Lifestyle choices also have a huge impact on your concentration and academic achievement, so make healthy choices in nutrition, exercise and sleep for peak performance



Why can't we concentrate?

- there are **so many thoughts** invading our minds
- and there are **so many distractions**
- we have become so used to attending immediately to these distractions, such as text messages and social media posts, that **we have worn down our attention spans**
- we need to become aware of this and **build up our concentration 'will' again**





Thoughts and Emotions

Thoughts can overwhelm us and trigger emotions and more thoughts, for instance remembering an argument or a difficult meeting can stir up emotions that distract us still further

We do not acknowledge the positive aspects of life as much which leads to more negative thoughts

However, **we can train our minds** to recognise this trait and halt the process and direct our thoughts in a more positive direction with **self-talk**



Improve your focus to improve your grades

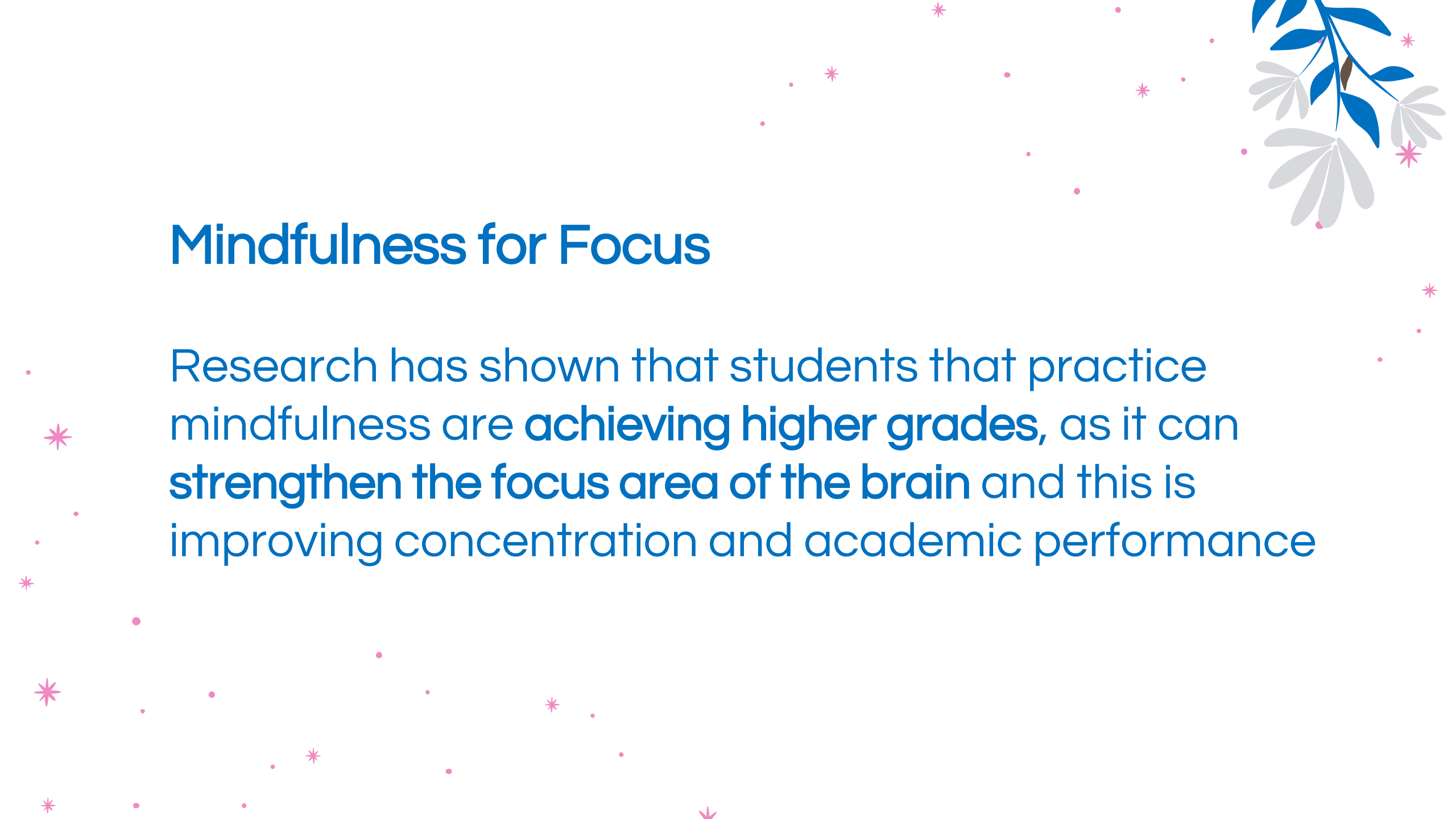
You don't need to learn to concentrate when you watch a film, video, social media post or you are talking to a friend – you are concentrating, become more aware of what you are concentrating on! Build your concentration daily. **Live in the moment!**

- Learning to pay attention takes conscious control
- Memory is linked to concentration – improve your focus and you will improve your memory
- Multi-tasking is not good for attention or focus – it spreads concentration too thinly



Mindfulness for Focus

Research has shown that students that practice mindfulness are **achieving higher grades**, as it can **strengthen the focus area of the brain** and this is improving concentration and academic performance



Documented Benefits of Mindfulness in Research

Stress reduction
Clarity and focus
Greater resilience
Enhanced creativity
Improved relationships
Improved concentration
Rapport and communication
Improved health and wellbeing

Greater confidence and self-esteem
Reduced anxiety and depression
Improved work-life balance
Greater work satisfaction
Memory enhancement
Intuitive ability
Pain reduction
Happiness





Mindfulness Benefits for Students with Concentration Difficulties

one of the most effective non-pharmaceutical treatments for ADHD

Cognitive Benefits

- *enhanced attention control*
- *better working memory*
- *strengthened executive function*
- *increased focus*

Emotional Well-being

- *greater emotional regulation*
- *reduced emotional reactivity*
- *enhanced self-compassion*
- *boost in overall happiness*

Social Aspects

- *elevated self-awareness*
- *effective conflict resolution*
- *better communication*
- *improved relationships*

Behavioural Improvements

- *greater self-regulation*
- *diminished impulsivity*
- *increased motivation*
- *enhanced productivity*
- *easier initiation of tasks*

Mental Health and Sleep

- *better sleep quality*
- *lowered stress levels*
- *effective treatment for depression and anxiety disorders (common comorbidities with ADHD)*



Better Concentration
increases your chances of
Better Grades and
Greater Academic Success
by strengthening the
Focus Area of your brain



Amygdala

- memory
- decision making
- emotional responses

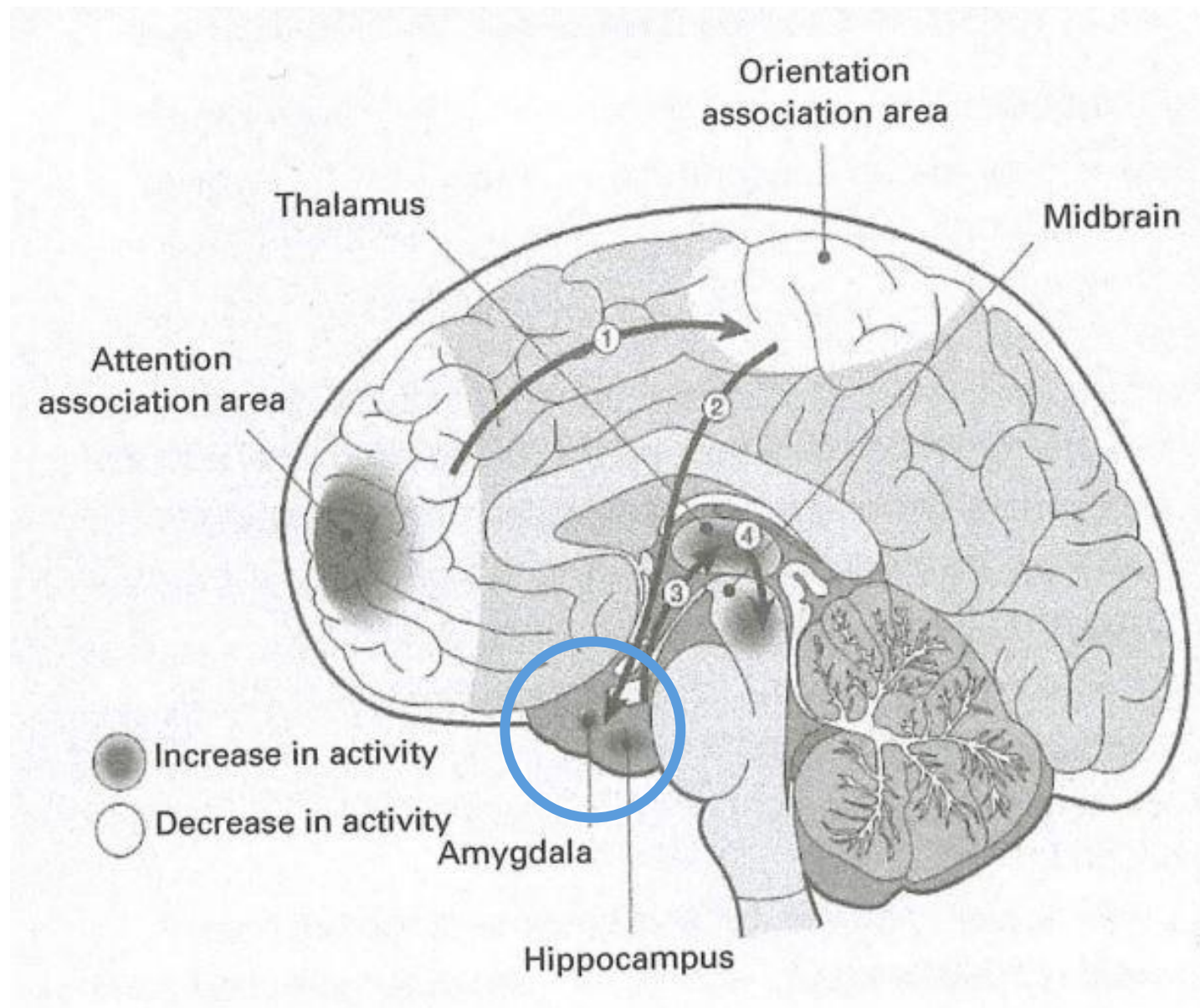
Hippocampus

- spatial memory

short term memory

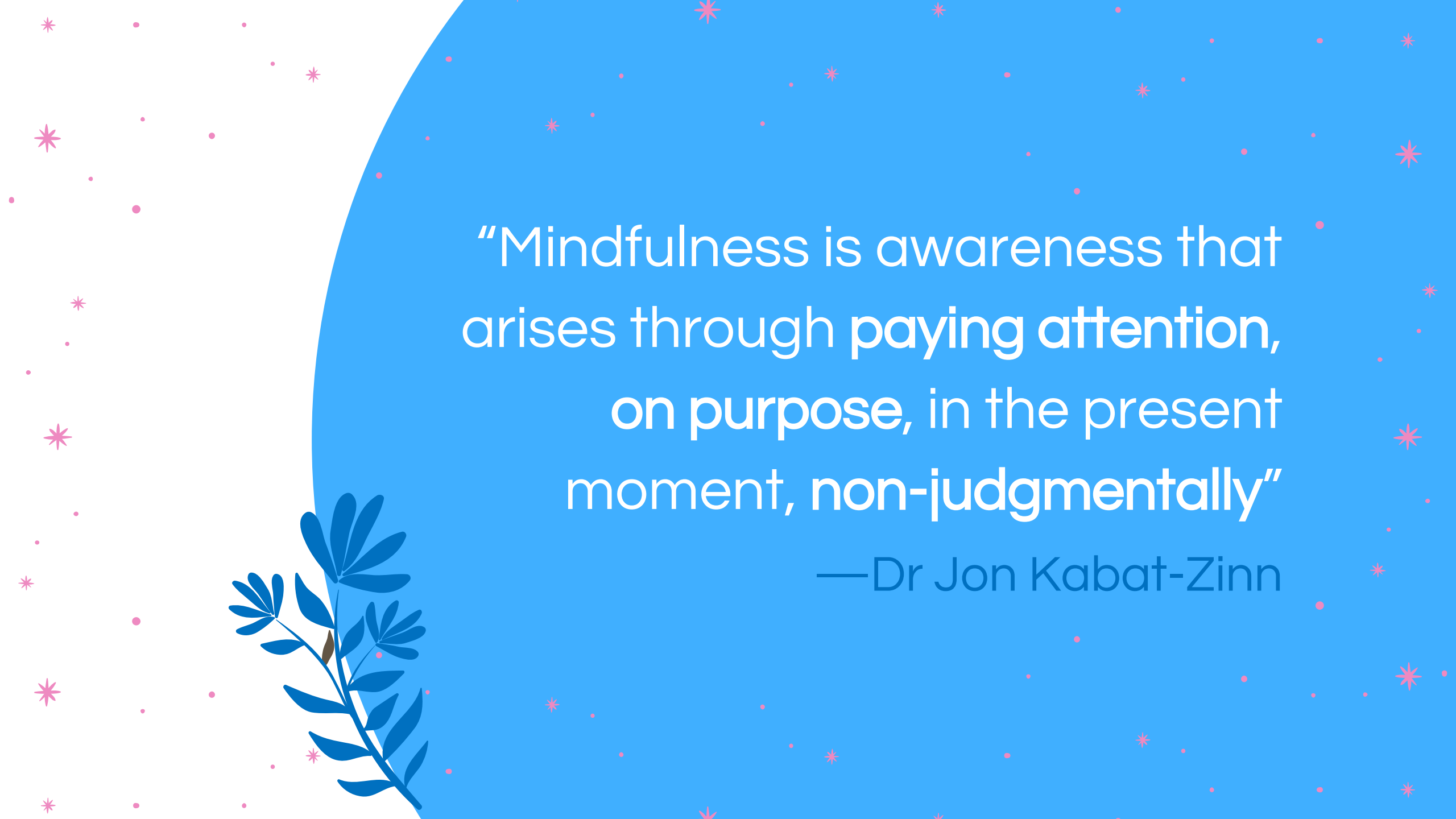


long term memory



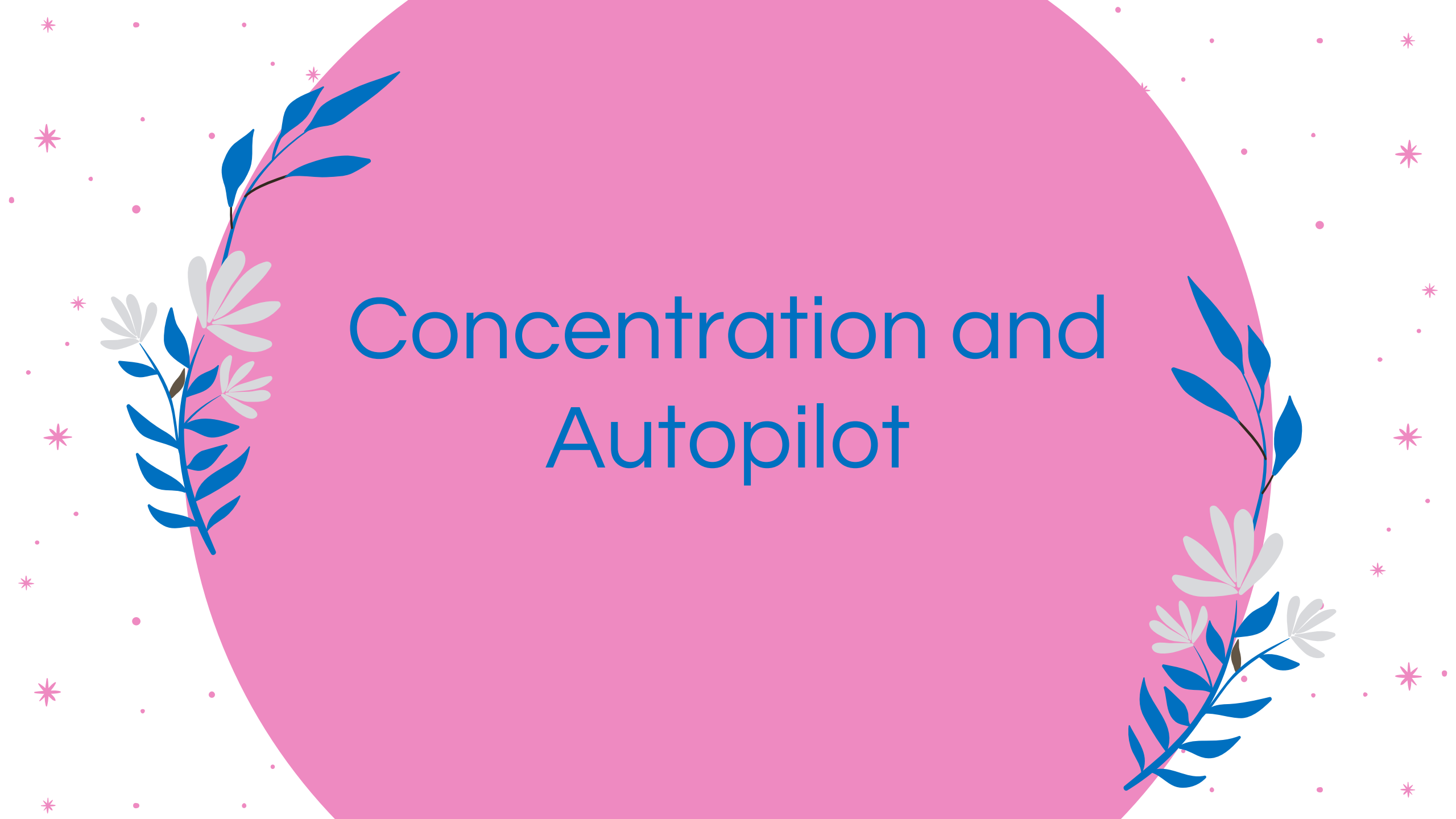


What is mindfulness and how can it help?



“Mindfulness is awareness that
arises through paying attention,
on purpose, in the present
moment, non-judgmentally”

—Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn



Concentration and Autopilot



Life in Autopilot




- Crane (2009) “often beyond our conscious awareness our thinking mind is engaged in judging, monitoring, and problem-solving aspects of our internal and external experiences.”
- The mind is operating, habitually it decreases the ability to make conscious choices about how to respond to both internal and external experiences, **including where to focus our attention**

<https://www.mindfulnessmuse.com/mindfulness/pros-and-cons-of-being-on-automatic-pilot>



Meditation **enhances attentional control** and cognitive flexibility, making it easier to override automatic processes and respond to stimuli in a non-habitual way (Moore and Malinowski, 2009)

A blue circular graphic with white text and decorative elements. The text is centered and reads "Informal and Formal Mindfulness". The circle is decorated with white stars and dots, and two branches of leaves (one dark blue, one white) curve around the left and right sides.

Informal and
Formal
Mindfulness

Sleep – Memory and Concentration

Blue light reducing glasses for an hour before bed

Reduce lighting in the environment an hour before bed

Try to keep off technology an hour before bed

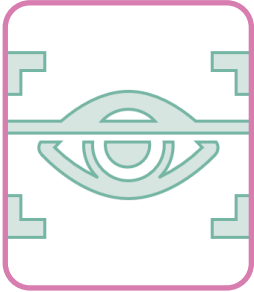
* Keep the room dark and cool for sleep

• Sleep if possible, between 10am-6am ideally – set reminder for 9pm

* • Daylight on face – not through glass, either a walk or looking out of a window within an hour of waking up for about 2 min on a sunny day and up to 10 mins on an overcast*day.



A quick exercise to quiet your mind



First, close your eyes, clear your mind, and begin to breathe deeply



Inhale slowly concentrating on the air flowing into your lungs, hold your breath for a few seconds, and exhale slowly while concentrating on the air flowing out



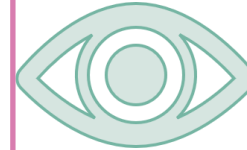
Focus only on the movement of air in and out of your body



As you do this, repeat in your thoughts or out loud, 'I AM CALM IN MIND & BODY'



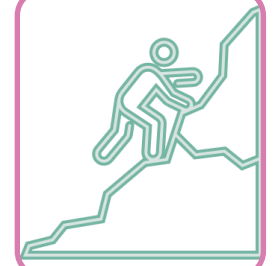
After a few minutes of breathing and reciting this mantra, you will begin to feel a calming and relaxing sensation wash over you



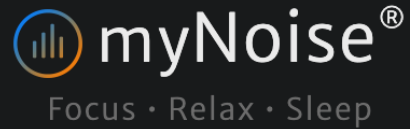
Now open your eyes and come back to the present moment



Notice how the exercise slows down your thoughts and emotions enough to think better and more clearly.



This is an easy and effective way to start to improve concentration



Discover a world of immersive and customizable soundscapes that can enhance focus, relaxation, and sleep. Choose from noise generators, nature sounds and ambient music to create your perfect audio environment. Explore our vast library of interactive sound generators and find your audio haven!

WSJ · The New York Times · The Atlantic · c|net · CBS ·  · 

mynoise.net

Meditation Bell [L]

R

Random Bells from 5 to 60 min

Cafe Restaurant ☆
Coffee-Shop Background Noise Generator

Meditation Bell [L]

R

Random Bells from 5 to 60 min



Guided Meditation Apps



[headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)



[calm.com](https://www.calm.com)



[insighttimer.com](https://www.insighttimer.com)



Jon Kabat-Zinn



Accountability Through Habit-Tracking



habitshareapp.com





Focusmate

Accountability Through Virtual Co-Working

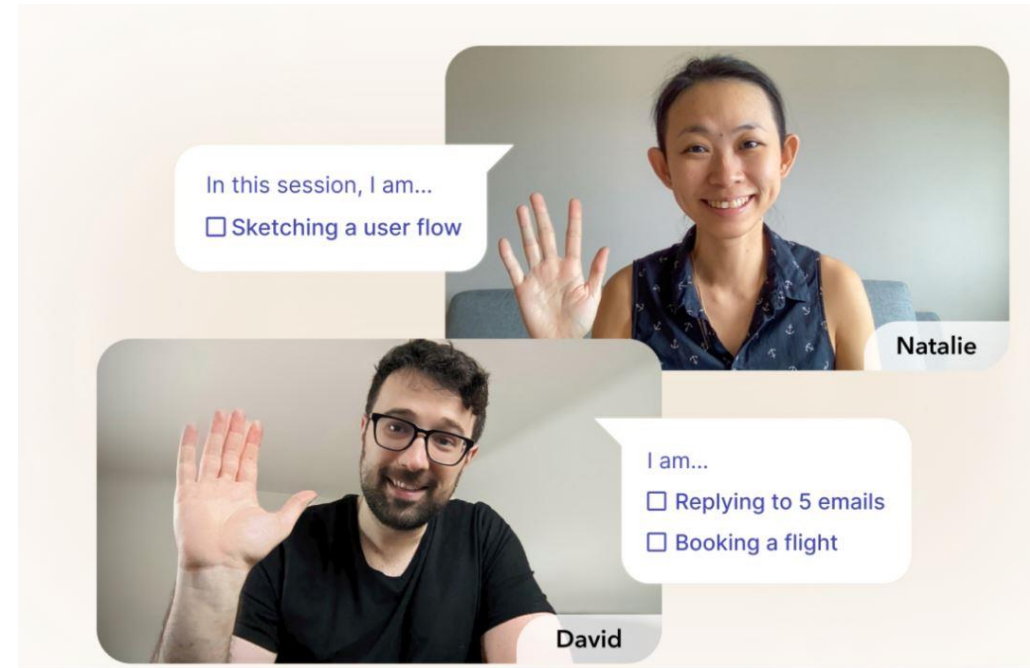
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The **Pomodoro Technique** is a [time management](#) method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s.^[1] It uses a [kitchen timer](#) to break work into intervals, typically 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. Each interval is known as a *pomodoro*, from the Italian word for tomato, after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer Cirillo used as a university student.^{[2][1]}

[Apps](#) and websites providing timers and instructions have widely popularized the technique. Closely related to concepts such as [timeboxing](#) and [iterative and incremental development](#) used in software design, the method has been adopted in [pair programming](#) contexts.^[3]

Description [\[edit \]](#)

The original technique has six steps:

1. Decide on the task to be done.
2. Set the Pomodoro timer (typically for 25 minutes).^[1]
3. Work on the task.
4. End work when the timer rings and take a short break (typically 5–10 minutes).^[4]
5. Go back to Step 2 and repeat until you complete four pomodoros.
6. After four pomodoros are done, take a long break (typically 20 to 30 minutes) instead of a short break. Once the long break is finished, return to step 2.



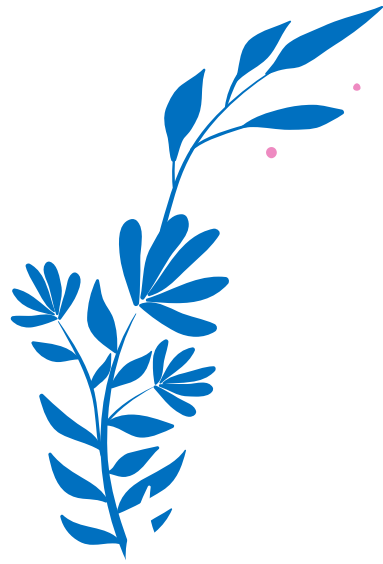
A pomodoro kitchen timer. 

[Pomodoro[®] Technique - Time Management Method \(pomodorotechnique.com\)](http://pomodorotechnique.com)



ADHD Solutions

- ✓ Guided meditation apps
- ✓ Variety of mindfulness practices
- ✓ Active meditation
- ✓ Evening practice to improve sleep
- ✓ Accountability through habit tracking
- ✓ Clear goals and relevance
- ✓ Start small and be consistent
- ✓ Habit-stacking
- ✓ Group classes or body doubling
- ✓ Non-judgemental approach
- ✓ Self-care framing
- ✓ Visual reminders and notifications
- ✓ Relax posture for formal practice
- ✓ Optimise the environment
- ✓ Optimise the timing



THANKS



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