

The Impact of Physical Condition on Concentration

The concept of concentration as it applies to college studies is simply recognized as intensely focusing on and applying exclusive attention to understanding what is set before you. It is of course a higher form of human mental pursuit that eventuates in actualization of a desired outcome...success with accommodation and assimilation of acquired knowledge.

Nonetheless, concentration has some basic foundational requirements that bring in to play the concepts indicated by Maslow regarding the human hierarchy of needs. As has been proven over again, our success at actually achieving higher endeavors is seated on satisfaction of basic physiologic needs. In other words, without one's physical needs being met first, it is difficult to near impossible to get higher needs met.

Consequently, it is to be anticipated that improvement in concentration begins with good general health and physical condition. The Counseling Service of the University of Cambridge, relative to our ability to concentrate, offers that "When we are in good physical condition – i.e. feeling rested, relaxed and comfortable (e.g. satiated) – and our emotions are calm and benevolent (absent of worry or concern), then we tend to be positive about things. This in turn raises self-esteem, which makes us more able to concentrate..."

Commensurate with this view, we find further advice from the Texas Woman's University Counseling Center as it is suggested that "your ability to study or concentrate depends a great deal on what shape you are in at the moment you sit down to study." In furtherance of the idea that good nutrition, rest and exercise are pursuant to good general health/physical condition and thereby relevant to improved concentration, we find in recent review in JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) in particular that "a varied and well-balanced diet, besides regular physical exercise (coupled with adequate rest of eight or more hours per night) are essential" for the mental faculties of concentration and attention to detail.

Therefore, some guidelines can be suggested:

- Study at a time when you feel most alert and are physically fresh having discovered when it is best for you and not so much as when it is convenient.
- Plan your studying so that you can take short, scheduled breaks.
- Get plenty of sleep and moderate exercise.
- Wear certain kinds of clothes and be mindful of environmental temperature.
- Be careful to control your sugar, fat, caffeine and alcohol intake before you study as to little or much of any of these can adversely affect your ability to concentrate.

Just remember that success at concentrating on studies demands that you allow yourself to focus on what you are doing. A body that is fit and well will help you succeed.

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