



7 Smart Habits to Boost Mental Clarity

With so many things to do and think about, you may well find yourself lost in brain fog, and wondering what to do about it.

Returning to a state of Mental Clarity can take time. But utilizing some strategies for reducing stress and reorganizing your thinking may help. Here are 7 habits that may help boost your Mental Clarity.

Habit #1 Clear Your Mind

One habit you might want to do on a regular basis is a little mental house cleaning. When you clear your mind you can remove unnecessary items that are clogging the system and make more room for an uncluttered way of thinking.

For example, take out the garbage. But how do you do that with thoughts? One way is to do what is known as a “brain dump.” Having a habit of writing in a journal can be helpful to pour out all of the extra thoughts and emotions that don’t need to be in the forefront of your thinking. Spend some time each day emptying your head by writing it down. Go from having your mind full, to becoming “*mindful*”, by purging what you don’t need, and retaining those things that you do want to focus on.

Another way to clear your mind is by using a calendar to write down important dates and appointments. By posting them in a way that can be tracked and reviewed often, you don’t have to try to remember everything. If your dentist appointment isn’t for two more weeks, you don’t have to remind yourself every day about it. Check your calendar to stay on top of what’s coming up, but let your mind be free to think of daily tasks in the meantime.

Habit #2 Take Regular Breaks

Your brain gets worn out after several hours of repetitive activity. So give it a rest. By taking regular breaks throughout the day, you create space in your mind. If you are constantly receiving input, eventually you’ll run out of room.

Your brain is like a receiving dock with ships pouring in every day with more cargo. If you don’t reroute the cargo to another bay, or ship it out to its next destination, pretty soon the ships will have no place to unload. Stop allowing new ships into your harbor until the cargo from the last group has been processed.

Your harbor also needs to shut down at night so your workers can get some rest. Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep to refresh your brain for the next day. When you sleep, your brain’s waste clearance system cleans up your central nervous system and toxic by-products from the days build up. Sleep contributes to organizing your memories, improves problem solving skills and concentration. Without good sleep you may find yourself lethargic, more confused and irritable. Get plenty of sleep and take regular breaks throughout the day to promote your brain’s ability to do its job at peak performance.

Habit #3 Daily Meditation

Meditation is a habit that can reap benefits every time you do it, as well as collectively over time. This practice can give you a sense of calm, peace and bring you into a state of balance. By refocusing your attention on your breath and letting go of busy thoughts, you may find yourself more grounded and less stressed.

For starters, five or ten minutes of sitting in meditative silence can be helpful. And as you gain discipline and experience you may

want to increase your time to twenty or thirty minutes.

“I have so much to accomplish today that I must meditate for two hours instead of one.” - Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was referring to the fact that the benefits of meditation were so helpful that he would be more productive on a hectic day if he spent a little more time preparing with meditation first!

There are many books and websites dedicated to the practice of meditation. But the basic steps are to sit down, close your eyes and focus on your breath. If thoughts arise, acknowledge them and let them go, and return to focusing on your breath.

Some people like to use a timer so they won't be distracted wondering how long they've been sitting there. Set a timer for five minutes and then forget about it. Just focus on your breathing. When the timer goes off, open your eyes slowly and do some gentle stretching. When you are ready, get up and carry on with your day with better clarity and mindfulness.

Habit #4 Focus on What Matters

If you have too many thoughts swirling around in your head fighting for your attention, focus on what matters most. It's hard to have mental clarity when you are trying to think about too many things at one time. For example, if your mind is bogged down with your daily to-do list, write it down so you can look at it from another perspective and batch your tasks into individual groups. By getting it out of your head and onto paper, you can get organized and prioritize your list.

Fragmented thinking is not an effective way of accomplishing anything. So choose the most important thing first and then work on the following tasks one at a time.

Habit #5 Take a Walk

A simple but very effective way to boost mental clarity is to take a walk. But how can something so easy make such a difference in how you think? Why does it seem to clear our heads? One reason is the fact that walking increases blood flow. When you have more blood flow reaching the brain, it stimulates the release of endorphins. These are neurochemicals that make us feel good and reduce stress and pain.

Many of the great thinkers throughout history accredited long walks with inspiration and problem-solving. Walking is one of the most common ways to boost mental clarity and clear away the brain fog.

Habit #6 Watch What You're Consuming

The foods or substances you are putting into your body are affecting your thinking, either positively or negatively. Caffeinated drinks like coffee or green tea may give you a quick boost temporarily but they won't solve the underlying reasons for your foggy thinking.

Eating healthy foods and avoiding extra salty or sugary foods can help maintain brain health. Too many carbs and sugar can spike blood glucose levels, leaving you feeling depressed, tired and irritable. According to research, eating foods that promote brain health, like leafy green vegetables, berries, walnuts and fatty fish may help improve your mental clarity.

Habit #7 Declutter the Junk Mail

One more tip you might want to remember is to empty your mental "junk mail" folder. You don't need to keep track of all the meaningless chatter that gets sent your way. For example, if someone at your office keeps telling you all of the latest gossip about your co-workers personal business, you can delete it from your mental file. By letting go of repetitive loops of irrelevant news you can clear the space and reserve your thinking for things that really matter.

If something needs your attention, then act accordingly to address the need. But letting go of other people's problems and social trivia will make you feel lighter and less stressed.

“Just because some people are fueled by drama doesn't mean you have to attend the performance.” - Cheryl Richardson