

# Focus & Attention Management — Workbook

This workbook transforms the course concepts into personal practice. Each section corresponds to one module and contains exercises, worksheets, and checklists designed to move you from understanding attention science to operating a personalised focus system. Complete each section alongside or immediately after watching the corresponding module for maximum retention.

## How Attention Actually Works

Apply the neuroscience of attention to your own patterns by conducting a structured 5-day audit and calculating your personal focus baseline.

### Exercise: Attention Network Mapping

Reflect on a recent workday and map your experience of each brain network. Think of specific moments when you were in deep focused work (CEN active), daydreaming or planning (DMN active), and when an interruption or notification pulled you off task (SN fired). Use the prompts below to build self-awareness before starting the audit.

- Describe a moment this week when you were in genuine deep focus. What were you working on, where were you, and what conditions enabled it?  
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- Recall the last time you were interrupted mid-task. How long did it take you to feel fully back in the original work? What did that transition feel like?  
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- What open loops (unfinished tasks, unanswered messages, unresolved worries) are you currently carrying in working memory right now?  
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- After reading about attention residue, which of your current work habits do you now suspect is secretly taxing your focus?  
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### Worksheet: 5-Day Attention Audit Log

Complete this log every day for 5 consecutive workdays. Track the fields below at the end of each 90-minute work period. Transfer your totals to the Attention Baseline Tracker template in the Templates section.

Date  
\_\_\_\_\_

Time block (start–end)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work type (Deep / Shallow / Reactive)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Energy level at start (1–10)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Energy level at end (1–10)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of focus breaks during block  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Primary interruption source (Internal / Notification / Colleague / Meeting / Other)

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Estimated recovery time after largest interruption (minutes)

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Notes / observations

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### Checklist: Week-1 Awareness Actions

- Install RescueTime (free tier) or enable Screen Time / Digital Wellbeing on your phone before starting the audit
- Print or create a paper version of the 5-Day Attention Audit Log and place it on your desk
- Complete the Attention Network Mapping exercise before your first tracked workday
- Set a recurring phone reminder every 90 minutes during work hours labelled "Log your focus block"
- After Day 5, calculate your average deep-work hours per day, peak energy window, and top 3 interruption sources
- Compare your calculated deep-work average to the benchmark standards from Lesson 3 and note the gap

## Designing Your Deep-Work Architecture

Design and stress-test a personalised deep-work schedule, select your depth philosophy, and set up your physical and digital environment before the next work week begins.

### Exercise: Depth Philosophy Selection and Schedule Design

Use the four depth philosophies (Monastic, Bimodal, Rhythmic, Journalistic) to design a realistic first-version schedule. Be honest about your constraints — an over-ambitious design abandoned on Day 3 is worse than a modest design held for 30 days.

- Which depth philosophy most closely matches your current role and life constraints? What specific constraint makes Monastic or Bimodal impractical right now (if applicable)?

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- What is your peak energy window based on your 5-day audit? Block this window on your calendar for deep work for the next 4 weeks — what obstacles or meetings currently occupy that time?

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- Design your ideal Tuesday using 30-minute calendar blocks from wake to sleep. Label each block: Deep / Shallow / Admin / Meeting / Break / Personal. Where does your first 90-minute deep sprint sit?

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- What is the single most important cognitive output you produce in your role (the thing, if done deeply, that most advances your career or business)? Is it currently scheduled in your peak window?

### Worksheet: Ideal Week Template

Fill in your ideal repeating weekly schedule below. This is not your current schedule — it is the target architecture you will work toward over 4 weeks. For each block, specify the work type and any relevant rules (e.g., "No notifications", "Phone in drawer").

Monday 6 AM–8 AM: Work type and rules

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Monday 8 AM–12 PM: Work type and rules

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Monday 12 PM–2 PM: Work type and rules

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Monday 2 PM–6 PM: Work type and rules

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Tuesday 6 AM–8 AM: Work type and rules

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Tuesday 8 AM–12 PM: Work type and rules

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Tuesday 12 PM–2 PM: Work type and rules

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Tuesday 2 PM–6 PM: Work type and rules

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Wednesday deep-work block start time and duration

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Thursday deep-work block start time and duration

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Friday deep-work block start time and duration

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Designated meeting windows (days/times)

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Email batch times (2 per day)

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Shutdown ritual time

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Weekly review scheduled day and time

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### Checklist: Environment Setup Checklist

- Designate a specific physical location exclusively for deep work (a particular desk, chair, or corner)
- Remove your phone from your desk surface during deep-work blocks — place it in a drawer, bag, or another room
- Install Freedom, Cold Turkey, or LeechBlock NG and schedule your first week of deep-work block sessions
- Disable all push notifications on desktop and phone except the 3-contact phone-call exception
- Set up a brown-noise or focus-music source (Brain.fm, Endel, or Noisli) for your deep-work blocks
- Create a dedicated browser profile for deep work with only task-relevant bookmarks
- Add a calendar block labelled DO NOT SCHEDULE for your peak energy window on all 5 workdays next week
- Place a physical notepad or open a single-purpose capture document beside your workstation for during-session capture

## Eliminating Distraction at the Root

Execute a systematic distraction audit, set up communication protocols, and establish a daily mindfulness practice using the tools and frameworks from Module 3.

### Exercise: The Craftsman's App Audit

Apply Newport's craftsman test to every app and platform in your digital life. The craftsman test asks: does this tool contribute substantially to the activities that matter most to my work, or am I keeping it for a vague possible benefit? Be rigorous — most tools that pass the "any benefit" test fail the craftsman test.

- List every app or digital platform you opened in the past 7 days. For each, write one sentence describing the specific professional benefit it provides.
- For each app you listed, estimate the percentage of your total usage that is professionally essential vs habitual or entertainment-driven. Which 2–3 apps have the highest habitual-use percentage?
- For your top 3 habitual-use apps, what would actually be lost if you deleted them for 30 days? Is that loss professional or personal? Is it truly irreplaceable?
- Draft a 30-day digital experiment: which 1–2 apps will you remove or time-lock for the next 30 days? What specific outcome will you use to judge whether to restore them?

### Worksheet: Communication Protocol Builder

Design your personal communication protocol for email, instant messaging, and meeting requests. Include the specific rules, the channels where you will broadcast them, and the language you will use to explain your approach to colleagues or clients.

Email batch times (specify exact times, e.g., 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM)

Email auto-responder text (draft the exact message)

Slack / Teams DND hours (specify the block)

Slack / Teams SLA statement (draft the exact status message or pinned note)

Definition of urgent (the specific threshold that justifies interrupting a focus block)

Meeting windows available (days and times)

Meeting scheduling tool / link

How you will communicate these protocols to your team or clients (channel and message draft)

One process-centric message rewrite: choose a recent email chain with 4+ back-and-forths and rewrite the next reply to close it in one message

## Checklist: Distraction Elimination Checklist

- Complete the 7-day RescueTime or Screen Time review and identify your top 3 distraction apps by total weekly hours
- Apply the craftsman test to every app with more than 30 minutes of use per week
- Delete, move to a hidden folder, or time-lock your top 2 habitual-distraction apps
- Set up the Freedom or Cold Turkey block schedule covering all deep-work windows next week
- Write and publish your communication protocol (email auto-responder, Slack status, calendar notes)
- Place a physical capture notepad on your desk and commit to using it for all mid-session thoughts for 2 weeks
- Download and complete one 10-minute beginner mindfulness session this week (Headspace, Waking Up, or Insight Timer)
- Schedule one 30-minute productive meditation walk this week with a specific intellectual problem defined in advance

## Sustaining and Recovering Your Attention

Audit your sleep, exercise, and recovery practices, build a personal recovery menu, and establish the weekly attention review as a recurring system.

### Exercise: Lifestyle Foundations Audit

Honest assessment of your current sleep, exercise, and recovery practices against the evidence-based benchmarks from Module 4. This is not about guilt — it is about identifying the 1–2 lifestyle levers with the highest attentional ROI for your specific situation.

- What is your actual average sleep duration over the past 2 weeks (use phone sleep-tracking, Fitbit, Oura, or rough recall)? How does that compare to the 7–9 hour target? What is the single biggest structural obstacle to hitting the target?

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- Describe your current wake time consistency. Do you wake within 30 minutes of the same time 7 days a week? If not, what is blocking a consistent anchor?

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- How many minutes of moderate aerobic exercise do you average per week currently? What is the gap from the 150-minute WHO guideline? What is one realistic change to close 50% of that gap this month?

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- Review your current break behaviour during the workday. Are your breaks genuinely restorative (nature, rest, movement) or pseudo-rest (social media, news, light entertainment)? Name 3 replacement activities from the Recovery Menu that you will test this week.

### Worksheet: Personal Recovery Menu Builder

Design your personal recovery menu across three time tiers. For each activity, record: activity name, minimum time required, best context for use (post-deep-work, midday, evening), and a note on any friction to remove (e.g., running shoes by the door, park route saved in maps).

Micro recovery #1 (2–5 min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Micro recovery #2 (2–5 min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Short recovery #1 (10–20 min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Short recovery #2 (10–20 min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Short recovery #3 (10–20 min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Long recovery #1 (60+ min): activity, context, friction-removal note

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Pre-deep-work primer (20-min exercise before session): activity, planned time, days per week

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NSDR / nap protocol: method chosen, scheduled time, duration target

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Weekly offline activity (no screens, no notifications): activity, planned day and duration

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### Checklist: Weekly Attention Review Setup

- Schedule a recurring 30-minute block every week for your weekly attention review (Sunday evening or Friday afternoon recommended)
- Create or download the Weekly Focus Metrics Tracker template from this workbook
- Set your deep-work hours target for next week (start conservatively — 20% above your current baseline)
- After your first review session, identify one specific system upgrade to implement the following week
- After 4 weeks of reviews, compare your current weekly deep-work hours to your original baseline audit — calculate the percentage improvement
- Commit to the 1 PM caffeine cut-off and evaluate sleep quality change after 14 days
- Add your wake time to a sleep-tracking app and aim for consistent  $\pm 15$ -minute variance for 30 days
- Block one 20-minute outdoor walk immediately before your primary deep-work block on at least 3 days next week

### Your Action Plan

1. Install RescueTime or review your phone's Screen Time report today to establish a 7-day digital usage baseline before making any changes
2. Complete the 5-Day Attention Audit using the workbook log to identify your peak energy window, deep-work average, and top 3 distraction sources
3. Select your depth philosophy (Rhythmic is recommended for most employed professionals) and design your Ideal Week using the worksheet template
4. Set up your physical and digital environment before the next workday: phone off desk, site blocker scheduled, brown-noise source ready, capture notepad placed
5. Apply the craftsman test to your app list and delete or time-lock the 2 highest-habitual-use apps for a 30-day experiment
6. Write and publish your communication protocol — email batch times, Slack SLA, and meeting windows — and share it with your primary collaborators
7. Begin a 10-minute daily mindfulness practice using a guided app (Headspace Day 1, Waking Up intro, or Insight Timer beginner series) and track streak in the Weekly Metrics Tracker
8. Build your personal recovery menu across micro, short, and long tiers; schedule your first NSDR or nap session this week
9. Set a consistent wake time and a 1 PM caffeine cut-off and maintain both for 30 days while tracking sleep quality
10. Run your first weekly attention review at the end of Week 1, record your metrics, identify one system failure and one system upgrade, and implement the upgrade before Week 2 begins











