



Dr. B. Duncan McKinlay
Psychologist

London, ON, Canada
url. www.lifesatwitch.com

Website:

Tourette Syndrome • OCD • ADHD
Sensory • ODD • IED/‘Rage’

Publishing:

*Nix Your Tics! Eliminate Unwanted Tic Symptoms:
A How-To Guide for Young People*

DEALING WITH DISTRACTION: COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY CLASSES

-GET LOTS OF SLEEP!!

-Manipulate your “hyperfocusing” ability: try to immerse yourself in the lecture by making the material as attention-getting as possible:

- *make it personally relevant (e.g. pretend YOU are the person being discussed in the history lesson)
- * frame the material in an interesting way for you (e.g. a situation where you might apply this new information to make your life better). Think about how this information impacts on you.
- *look at the lecture as a story and try to anticipate the next “chapter”.

-Don’t set yourself up: audio-tape the lectures so that you know if all else fails you can listen to the lecture again in snippets later (if you are very distractible that day, send the tape-recorder along with a friend).

-ADHD means that you cannot control where your attention goes, so keep any extra stimulation or distractions to a minimum:

- *don’t sit with chatty people
- *sit at the front of the lecture hall
- * put any instruments (e.g. calculators) you are not using out of sight (on the floor, in a bag, etc.)

-If you are past the point of being able to listen, keep yourself busy by writing down any overheads: this will force you to somewhat focus and you will have material to go back over later on.

-Meet with professors to explain your situation: forewarn them that you may leave abruptly in-class.

- *some professors or university disability offices will arrange for you to have another student scribe your notes, or photocopy them for you

-Make special arrangements for writing tests and exams:

- *do at the beginning of each term
- *discuss this with either with the professor or the disability office
- *may request longer time, oral exams, etc. depending upon your challenge

-Studying:

- *DON’T CRAM!!
- *study in short spurts, because that is how ‘we’ learn best
- *take breaks in-between without feeling guilty: doing something completely different and taking your mind off what you were studying will allow what you’ve learned to solidify
- *worry more about QUALITY of study than QUANTITY!!
- *study ‘actively’ — write study notes, connect the text to your notes, summarize chapters, do practice questions and/or exams (knowing the exam layout also helps reduce anxiety).
- *don’t plan breaks or rewards at specific times because this can distract you. Take the break when your brain is full and you can see by your distractibility that you need a breather
- *Don’t focus or worry too much on your ability to focus: this will have the opposite effect!