Concentration while Studying

Having trouble staying excited about differential equations or the causes of the fall of Rome? Find yourself reading and re-reading the same paragraph or page? Nodding off, and losing track of big chunks of time? Here are some things you can do to stay on track:

1. **Don’t study similar subjects back-to-back.** Sociology and political science information will run together in your mind. Break it up with math, biology, etc.

2. **Examine your study place.** Noisy? Full of Distractions? Change locale!

3. **Study in the same place every day/night.** This gets your brain conditioned for study as soon as you sit down in your study area.

4. **As soon as you realize you’re daydreaming, put a check in the margin of your notes or book.** Count the checks at the end of a session; try to make this number smaller each time you read! Go back and read or study where you have put check marks.

5. **If you’re fading rapidly,** stand up, face the other way, sit down and get back to work.

6. **Take short breaks (10 minutes) every hour or so.** Get up, walk around, talk to someone, get a snack, etc.

7. **Work while standing up for a while.** It’s hard to daydream while standing!

8. **If bothered about something,** and you find yourself thinking of it instead of your notes or textbook, **take out a piece of paper, write down what is bothering you, and then throw the paper away.** It’s a way of telling yourself, “Okay, get it out of your system.”

9. **Make deals with yourself.** For every hour of study, watch one TV show later. For an English paper completed, go to a movie on the weekend. For every three hours of studying, make one phone call. Stick to your plans…don’t reward yourself if you don’t complete the deal.

10. **Study with others.** Get a group together from class and meet regularly to go over notes/text. This works if it’s well organized. Don’t let it become a chatting session. Don’t choose people who are doing worse than you in the class; go for the superstars, if possible.