# 1 of 4: Track your distraction

Curious about your time online? Not sure if you're really getting distracted? You can use free websites to track how you're spending your time online.

[Link to Rescue time](https://www.rescuetime.com/) (if you choose to download/try the software, make sure you select the free version called RescueTimeLite)

Another possible way to track your distraction is to make a note every time you find yourself checking or flicking away from your work. Set yourself a time period for this - 20 minutes, an hour, whatever works for you. As well as helping you be aware of when you're getting distracted, this technique can also be a useful way to delay your distraction: Decide a time later to follow up the notes you've made.

After you've tracked your distraction, consider if you want to try implementing any strategies, covered in the following sections of this document.  
  


# 2 of 4: Find the right environment

We're often encouraged to believe that we're most productive at a desk in an office, a computer lab, or a library. This is true for some people, but not for everyone. Try studying in different places and think about what works best for you. Here are some questions to consider.

* Do you prefer silence, noise, or something in between?
* Do you want to be alone, with friends, or surrounded by strangers?
* Do you prefer a desk, a cafe table, or a sofa?
* Do you like an environment that reminds you of work, or something comforting and friendly?

To find out more about this, click on the link below to view a blog entry written by Dr El Spaeth (UofG)

[Link to blog entry, providing information about creating a suitable studying environment](https://ecspaeth.wordpress.com/2013/08/29/my-study-spot-exclusion-criteria-for-thesis-writing/)

It's also worth thinking about what time you work best. Early morning? Middle of the afternoon? Late at night? Try out different things and schedule your study sessions accordingly.



# 3 of 4: Master your tasks

For some people (I'm one of them), planning what I'm going to do really helps me to actually do it. It also makes me feel a sense of achievement for the things I tick off my list. I found this so helpful during my PhD that I wrote a series of blog posts on it, which I'm linking to here.

I wanted writing my thesis to have the same sense of achievement that I got from video games, especially the kind with lots of small quests. So, I experimented with breaking my study tasks down into small chunks, scheduling them into my week, and reviewing how it went. Here's more on those three main steps:

* [Link to blog entry: Identifying tasks (deciding what you need to do, and breaking things down into manageable chunks)](https://ecspaeth.wordpress.com/2013/01/22/ladder-1-rung-3-reviewing-tasks/)
* [Link to blog entry: Scheduling tasks (setting yourself different tasks for your study sessions)](https://ecspaeth.wordpress.com/2013/01/15/ladder-1-rung-2-scheduling-tasks/)
* [Link to blog entry: Reviewing tasks (thinking about what worked, what didn't, and why)](https://ecspaeth.wordpress.com/2013/01/07/ladder-1-rung-1-identifying-tasks/)

Another tactic to try is the **Pomodoro method**, where you set yourself a short time to work without distractions (say 20 or 25 minutes). After that you take a break, then repeat. This works well for me - it's much more manageable to work without checking social media for 25 minutes than for 3 hours. Learn more about this method, by clicking on the link below.

[Link to Pomodoro blog entry (tips on productivity)](https://mystudiouslife.wordpress.com/2011/07/22/productivity-help-with-pomodoro/)

# 4 of 4: Check your tech

Sometimes there can be technical solutions to getting distracted. However, I'd recommend trying other tactics, too, rather than relying on these.

Notifications: Getting distracted by notifications? Consider turning them off when you're studying. *This won't work for everyone - e.g. if you're nervously waiting for an email, you might find yourself checking MORE without notifications.*

* **Notifications:** Getting distracted by notifications? Consider turning them off when you're studying. This won't work for everyone - e.g. if you're nervously waiting for an email, you might find yourself checking MORE without notifications.
* **Work on paper**: Find that working on a computer always leads to looking at recipes on Pinterest? Try scheduling some offline work into your day.
* **Go offline**: Another solution to this is just to turn your WiFi off. If this isn't enough of a deterrent, try working somewhere with no WiFi or blocking access to certain sites using a plugin.



# Links to website blockers for internet browsers

* [Link to: LeechBlock NG (Firefox)](https://addons.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/addon/leechblock-ng/)  
  This software allows you to block specific (up to 30) websites and Social Media.
* [Link to: Block site (Firefox)](https://addons.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/addon/blocksite/)  
  Blocksite is an extension for Firefox, that enables you to block selected websites and disable associated links.
* [Link to: Block Site (Google Chrome)](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/block-site-website-blocke/eiimnmioipafcokbfikbljfdeojpcgbh?hl=en)  
  This add on for google Chrome, enables you to block distracting and or harmful websites.
* [Link to: Stay Focused (Google chrome)](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/stayfocusd/laankejkbhbdhmipfmgcngdelahlfoji?hl=en)  
  Stay Focused, helps your productivity by restricting the amount of time you can spend on 'time wasting' websites.