

# HOW TO PICK YOUR DAILY FOCUS AND WHY IT MATTERS



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You might have noticed a little box in the daily section of your Panda Planner called Focus. Wondering what that's all about and why you need it in your life? Allow us to give you a run down. Because, as it happens, using that little box is super simple yet surprisingly powerful.

Here's how it works.

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## WHAT IS DAILY FOCUS?

In a nutshell, daily focus is exactly what it sounds like. It's one key thing that you want to give your attention to today.

To give it a bit more depth, think of your day as a warehouse filled with shelf after shelf of various objects. These are the tasks, events, and distractions that vie for your attention in any given moment. Well, setting a focus is like shining a spotlight on just one of those objects. The other objects don't disappear; it's just that the spotlight reminds you to draw your attention back to that one important thing so you don't forget about it.

That's the power of the daily focus.

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## WHY SETTING A FOCUS IS IMPORTANT

It's too easy to get caught up in what needs to be done day-to-day without giving space to the things that will actually contribute to your goals in the long run. Yes, you need to do the laundry and feed the cat and cook dinner, but will any of those things progress you toward your dream of writing a book? Or at work, maybe your day gets filled with answering customer inquiries which, though important, doesn't help in your goal of developing new products.



Setting a focus makes sure you put aside a little bit of time to work on what's truly important as well as the things that are immediately pressing for your attention.

But does it actually work? In short, yes. Let's take a look.

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## THE SCIENCE BEHIND DAILY FOCUS

In psychological terms, setting a focus means we're using [top-down attention](#), also known as **goal-driven attention**, as opposed to bottom-up attention. Here's what both of those terms mean.

- **Bottom-up attention:** When we're exposed to a stimulus — say a sudden noise — our attention is involuntarily drawn to it, and then our brains work to make sense of what it is. In this scenario, what we perceive externally drives what we think and how we act.
- **Top-down attention** is the opposite: It's when we deliberately choose what to focus on, and our thoughts, knowledge, plans, and goals drive the way in which we perceive things.

Using top-down attention has various benefits, according to research; like [improving performance on tasks](#) and [enhancing control over neural processing](#).

Additionally, choosing a focus sets your **intention** to work on that thing for the day. And when you register your intention to do something, you're more likely to follow through. For example, [one study](#) found that smokers who logged a daily intention to quit were more likely to successfully abstain from smoking.

Daily focus can also be used for **deep work**. For example, if you set your daily focus to "writing" then you might put aside several hours where you have blocks of 45 minutes of focused work followed by a 15-minute break. This kind of schedule is great for getting into a "flow" state, where time seems to stop and you're completely immersed in what you're doing. [According to researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#), spending time in flow is great for health and happiness, and contributes to our quality of life by giving value to our momentary experiences.

You can tally up your deep work sessions by making a mark for each one in the Daily Focus box of your Panda Planner. That way you have a simple, visual way of tracking how your focus went — and seeing those little scores tally up will inspire you to do more again tomorrow.

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## HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR DAILY FOCUS

1. Single out one particular area of your life to work on. It may be work, family, your physical health, mental health, or any other area.
2. Think about what you specifically want to focus on in that area. Try and make it something that contributes to your longer-term goals. For example, if you want to set a family-related focus, and one of your life goals is to become a better parent, you might make it “spend time with the kids”.
3. Alternatively, your daily focus could be something general that spans different areas of life. For example, trying new things, being more present, or being kind to others are all things that you can do at home, at work, or anywhere else.
4. Your daily focus can be a short statement or a single word. The idea here is not to get complex but rather to give you a simple broad concept you can anchor to when planning and executing your day. For example, you might just write down the word “walk” and know that, for you, it means taking every opportunity that day to go by foot rather than take other forms of transportation.
5. Once you’ve determined your daily focus, keep it in mind while filling in the rest of your Panda Planner daily section. It can feed into other areas: For example, you might like to make your daily focus the basis for your priorities and tasks, or to schedule some time to work on it.





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## STILL NOT SURE? HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES

Your daily focus could be:

### WORK RELATED:

- Cut out distractions.
- Team building.
- Brainstorming and idea generation.
- Productive meetings.
- Take better breaks.
- Be more assertive.

### HEALTH RELATED:

- "Me" time.
- Eat healthy.
- Meditation.
- Mindful breathing.
- Get plenty of sleep.

### PERSONAL GROWTH:

- Go out of my comfort zone.
- Spread joy.
- Be generous.
- Be myself.
- Love.

### FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS:

- Spend time with family.
- Express gratitude.
- Show warmth and affection.
- Forgive.
- Be patient with my partner.

### GENERAL:

- Follow my intuition.
- Try new things.
- Passion.
- Meet new people.
- Find joy in the little things.

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## READY TO FIND YOUR FOCUS?

Setting your focus for the day is something you can do in hardly any time that can have a big positive impact. Give it a shot and see how it works for you. And if you're still unsure about anything, just ask us. We're happy to help.

# THANK YOU!

We're on a mission to help you take back control of your time, reclaim your happiness, and flourish in every way. If you're getting value out of the Panda Planner and our educational resources, please consider inviting your friends, family members, and colleagues to join the movement. Be sure you check out our other eBooks and videos over on [mypandaplanner.com](http://mypandaplanner.com).



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