

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
CATW Writing Passage

May 31, 2019

### How to Do One Thing at a Time

By now, we all know that multi-tasking can be a losing proposition. Talking on the phone while driving? Dumb idea. Texting while driving? Really dumb idea. But even seemingly harmless multi-tasking—like chatting with a friend while sending out an office e-mail—isn't as harmless or efficient as we'd like to believe. A recent article published in the science journal *NeuroImage* revealed that when we attempt demanding tasks simultaneously, we end up doing neither as well as we should because our brains have cognitive limits.

What's more, we're also less efficient after we've shut down e-mail and turned off our phones. In a recent experiment at Stanford University, a group of students was asked to spend 30 minutes simultaneously compiling a music playlist, chatting, and writing a short essay. A second group focused on each task individually for 10 minutes each. Afterward, they were given a memory test. The single-taskers did significantly better than their multi-tasking peers.

"A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it's performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once," says Clifford Nass, Ph.D., a professor of communication at Stanford University. "We still don't know the long-term effects of chronic multi-tasking, but there's no question we're bad at it, and it's bad for us."

Many experts believe, however, that it's possible to repair your power of concentration. Through solutions such as yoga and acupuncture, experts believe we can break our multi-tasking habit and sharpen our focus.

*Adapted from Women's Health Magazine, May 2010*

### Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that are needed to help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 75 minutes to complete your essay.