



How To Beat The Dangers of Distraction

Do you ever feel a bit overwhelmed about how much stuff you need to get done?

Life is coming at us faster than ever here in 2025, and with many different things clamouring for your attention, it can be tempting to want to juggle multiple things at once.

"I'll just listen to that podcast while I do the dishes." "I'll just answer that text while I'm watching TV."

Sound familiar?

But really, you're doing yourself – and the things you need to get done – a huge disservice. Because... and I hate to break it to you... multitasking is a myth.

Distractions when you're trying to singularly focus on one task at a time can be a dangerous impediment to your progress.

Let's dive into why...

Many believe that multitasking is the key to getting more done. But the truth is, multitasking often leads to decreased efficiency. Our brains simply aren't wired to handle several complex tasks simultaneously.

There's a reason that texting on your cell phone while driving is very, very illegal. But it's not just about the fact that texting takes your eyes off the road.

Research has shown that talking on the cell phone, which does not require taking your eyes off the road, or even just talking using your hands-free car system, is almost equally as fatal statistically as texting while driving.

Instead of actually managing many tasks simultaneously, our brains are actually rapidly switching between tasks, and we find ourselves frazzled, with mounting anxiety and dwindling productivity – especially when we try to function that way for extended periods of time.

"OK, but I have band tunes and solo tunes to memorize, plus I need to work on my steady blowing, and tuning, and fingerwork..."

Yep, there are a lot of different skills we need to juggle as pipers. So how do we even get started with narrowing our focus?

One effective strategy is to create a dedicated, distraction-free space for focused activities. This idea applies to any passion, but for pipers, it's critical. Whether it's a room, a corner, or even a special rug, having a space solely for practicing can make all the difference.

When it's time to practice, focus solely on that. A simple environment will help you achieve this. Turn off your smartphone and other connected devices, or put it on airplane mode and switch off your wifi, to eliminate unnecessary distractions. And avoid the temptation of checking notifications; although it's a habit for some of us, it will split your focus and derail your session.

Instead of lengthy, scattered practice sessions, aim for short, focused bursts. Sessions as brief as ten minutes can yield more progress than an hour of distracted practice. Prioritize the one thing you wish to improve and give it your full attention.

Here are some simple ways to avoid multitasking when you practice:

- Create a dedicated practice space that never gets disassembled, always ready for you to walk in and begin to practice. Do not share your space with others.
- If you must bring your smartphone/tablet/computer into your practice space, turn it to 'airplane mode' and/or disconnect from wifi so no trivial calls, texts, or notifications distract you.
- Teach family members and pets not to bother you when practicing.
- Play a simple instrument setup so you can focus on playing, not on fiddling with your instrument trying to get it to work.

Best wishes,

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