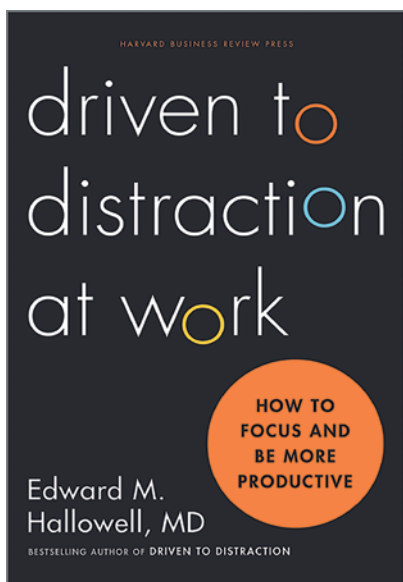


# Distracted? You May Have ADT (No, Not the Home Security System...)

Beth Mellinger



**D**riven to Distraction at Work: How to Focus and Be More Productive by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., introduces the term attention deficit trait (ADT), which he feels people in all work places are developing due to the constant interruptions, distractions, and chaos everyone is exposed to daily at work and home.

## Assessing Distractions

In the introduction, Hallowell writes that ADT in the workplace is caused by one or more of the six most common distractions, which he calls screen sucking, multitasking, idea hopping, worrying, playing the hero, and dropping the ball.

At the end of this part, readers are prompted to take a free assessment at [hbr.org/assessments/adt](http://hbr.org/assessments/adt) to see which distractions are problems for them. I found the assessment interesting and accurate. Taking this assessment will allow readers to identify their areas of distraction and use the book to learn how to minimize them.

## Identifying Six Common Distractions

In Part One, each one of the six distractions is examined as a case study. The author introduces six “patients” based on actual patients he has treated. Each chapter begins with a synopsis of the patient and how the distraction affects him or her.

Hallowell also provides symptoms for each distraction that readers can use to identify whether the distraction affects them. An example of the symptoms of screen sucking, for example, is:

- If my cell phone is out of reach, I feel disconnected.
- I can waste an hour online and not even realize it.
- I have a lack of discipline when it comes to the Internet.

The next part of the chapter is what the author recommends to his patient as treatment to overcome the distraction. At the end of each chapter is a list of 10 tips about what readers can do to overcome the distraction themselves.

## Training Yourself to Focus

In Part Two, the author describes five essential ingredients for clearing your mind and helping you focus: energy, emotion, engagement, structure, and control.

To achieve the optimal level of these five essentials, the author says people need what he calls the six basic practices of energy management, or the “Sensational 6”: sleep, nutrition, exercise, meditation, cognitive stimulation, and positive communication. Each of these is described in detail.

The patients from Part One are brought back in at this point, and readers find out how they were able

## Driven to Distraction at Work: How to Focus and Be More Productive

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to adapt their behavior and fix their work and home lives. Throughout this section, there are several references to other works by the author’s colleagues and to an application the author has developed to help readers reach their “Sensational 6.”

## Recommendation

When I read the title, I expected that this book was going to discuss the constant distractions that bombard us daily, such as e-mail, meetings, and colleague interruptions. Instead, this book is more of a self-help/self-improvement” book or guide to better mental health.

I did enjoy reading the book; it was a quick and easy read that contained helpful suggestions for me in my own workday. Though the book does not deal directly with information management, it is a good guide for organizing work and home lives and would be helpful to any professional. **END**

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