

# Attention and Concentration

The ability to pay attention to a task is very important. If there is a problem paying attention, things like school, work and rehabilitation will likely be affected. For example, if a person is at work and cannot finish the job or only finishes part of the job each day, he/she will likely be asked to leave that job.

Also, if at home and preparing a meal, it is important to pay attention to the stove to prevent a fire.

Paying attention to the cooking process means that the person needs to keep track of how long food is cooking and when it is time to shut off the stove.

Sometimes paying attention is affected by distractions. For example, while preparing a meal, the telephone rings. The person may begin to talk on the phone and then forget about the food on the stove. Having a brain injury can make a person more susceptible to distraction.

Attention can also be affected by something called "hemi-spatial neglect." This means that a person does not pay attention to a particular side of the body or a certain area in space.

This often happens when there is an injury to a parietal lobe of the brain.

For example, I can see my left foot, but I do not pay any attention to it. I may not know that it is **my** foot. The problem I now have is that I may bump my foot into the door frames because I do not make room for it.

Spatial neglect can also be seen in other daily activities. A person can see a whole plate of food but may only eat the food on the right side of the dish. Another example is that a person may only put clothes on the right side of the body or put make up on one side of the face. Attention is not paid to whatever object or task is in the 'neglected' area.