

# Focus in the age of AI assistants

How always-on AI access changes the economics of attention and what it means for sustained deep work.

AI changes the cost of switching tasks

An assistant that is always available can make small questions feel harmless.

The problem is not one interruption. It is the number of moments where attention is redirected before a thought has time to settle.

Sustained focus depends on continuity. When every uncertainty becomes a prompt, the mind learns to exit the work earlier and more often.

Design principle

Better support should protect attention

The strongest AI products will not simply answer faster. They will help users notice when assistance is useful and when it is fragmenting attention.

That means fewer alarms, calmer feedback, and measurements that change slowly enough to reward durable habits rather than reactive checking.

Practice

Use assistants around focus blocks, not through them

Try batching AI use before and after a deep work block. Define the problem first, then use AI for critique, summarization, or comparison after your own reasoning has something to stand on.

The goal is not less support. The goal is more deliberate support.