

Help your mind to focus

Take a break from your frenzied life by switching your phone and the wireless off, writes **Daisy Dumas**

WE are living in an era of information overload. Tweeting while talking on the phone, watching TV and flicking through magazines is not unusual in our busy, media-heavy, socially-networked lives nowadays.

So it is hardly surprising that focusing is becoming harder and concentration spans are shrinking: Time to centre the mind on a single subject and give it full concentration.

Speaking with Fox News, Margaret Moore, whose new book *Organize Your Mind, Organize Your Life: Train Your Brain To Get More Done In Less Time* aims to tackle overwhelmed lives, explained that attention is in such short supply these days that Attention Deficit Hyper-activity Disorder (ADHD) studies have been applied to the problem.

LIVING FRENZY

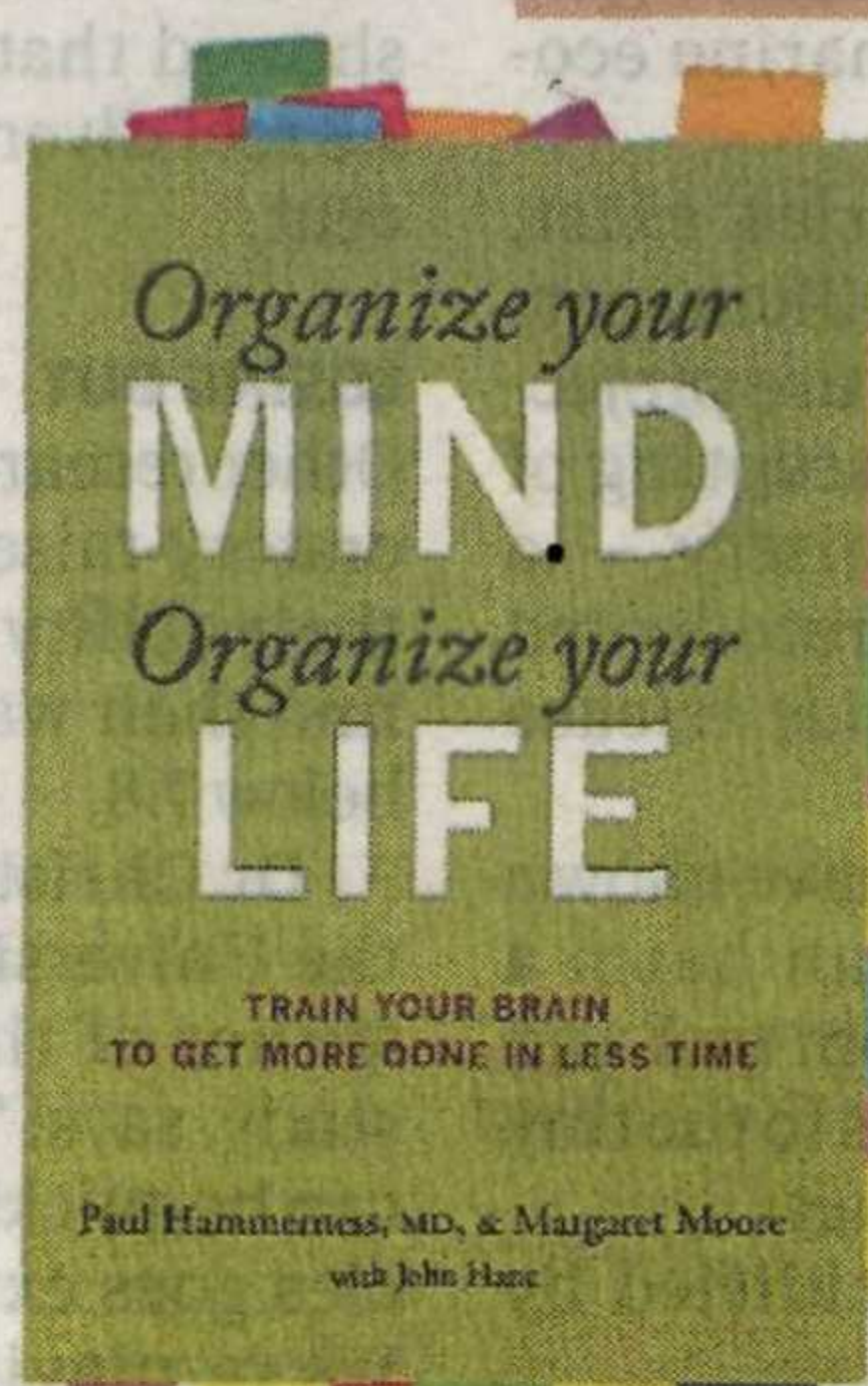
Taking neuroscientific data as a starting point, the book, co-authored with Paul Hammerness, gives people the tools to make lasting changes in their "frenzied lives".

"We've taught ourselves to multi-task... when we do that, we scatter the brain's attention... When we've brought all of our brain to focus on one thing, we're brilliant.

"Your brain gets worn down because it's not designed to do all of these tasks," Moore says. This, in turn, causes disorganisation.

The danger of disorganisation, she says, is that the brain becomes overwhelmed and "distended".

The answer is "not about the to-do list and apps. It's about using your mind and your brain in the most productive way".



Tips for regaining focus

- Exercise.
- Turn off the phone and wireless so that distractions are minimised.
- Do not write a long to-do list.
- Aim to concentrate for a solid 30 minutes rather than for eight hours.
- Close your door and enjoy getting into one thing.

Source: Foxnews.com

Not only is there rarely a chance to have a break from the arsenal of bombardments in our "hyper distracted" lives, but we are not allowing our minds to cope and be creative.

Moore says in turn our health takes a hit — which makes us even less focused.

"Manage the frenzy," Moore says, so that our negative habits do not "impair our ability to do things or to be creative".

HELP WANTED

Many turn to lists for help, but Moore says they are too long.

"We think about the 32 things we're not doing when we're doing the one thing we need to focus on." Instead, she tells the news site that we need to aim to "decide what's important and stick to that for the day".

Change your goals to smaller segments of 30 minutes at a time rather than aiming for

solid concentration for a full eight hours.

"Put yourself in the right frame of mind" through exercise, for example.

Take a break from your distracted day by switching your phone and wireless off, then "close your door and just enjoy getting into one thing", she says.

When you do that, you're creative, you get "the big picture" and you are able to nurture "high quality focus times".

"Even though you still have the 32 things to do, every day you get a few things done really beautifully. You feel like you're at your own level of brilliance.

"You have a lot more energy, and you feel a lot better about your life. You're more alive. Your energy is more alive because you're using it well."

Moore has a point. In forthcoming book, *Sleeping With Your Smartphone*, Leslie Perlow of Harvard Business School argues that phones need to be switched off and "outsourced".

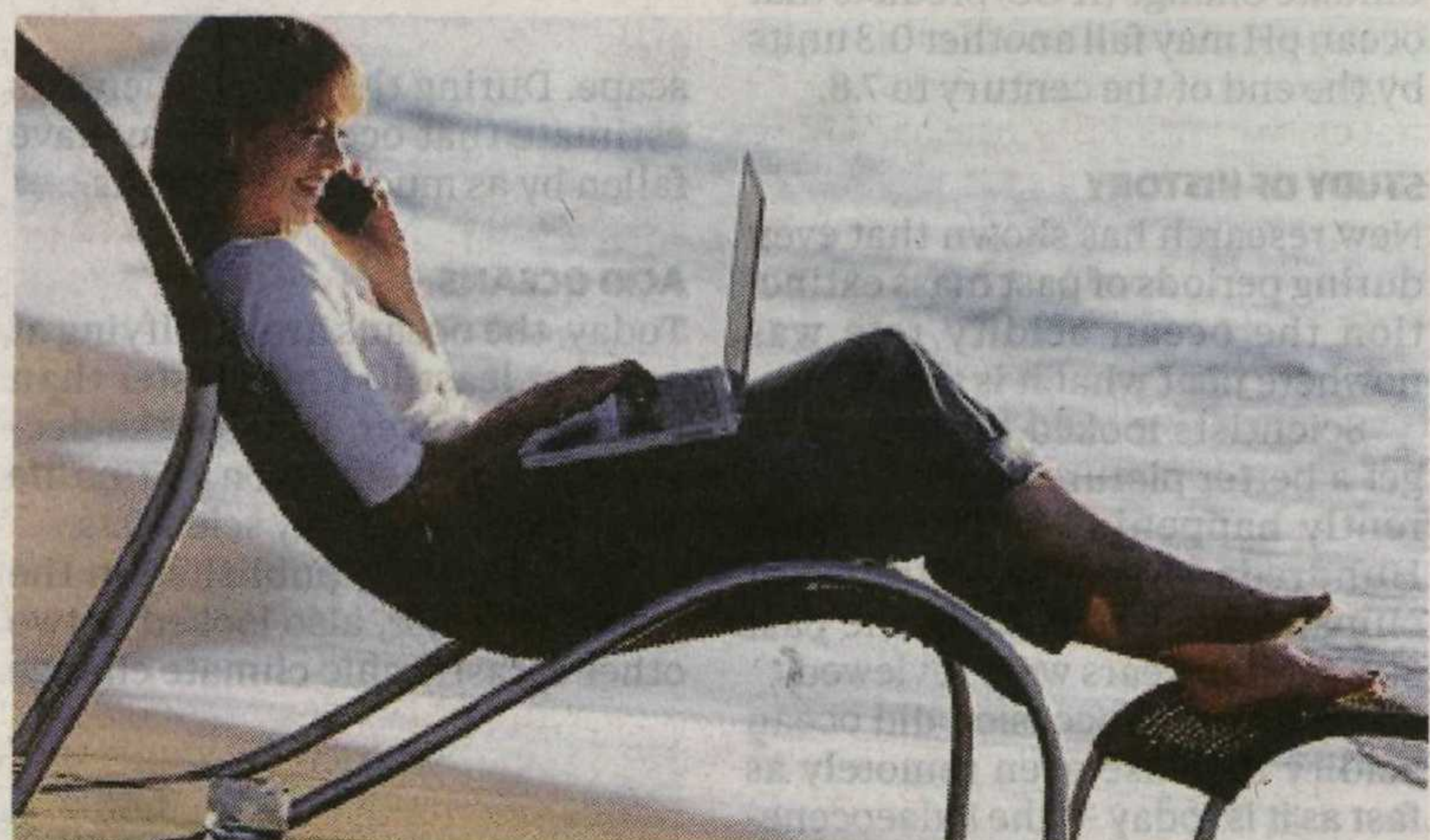
According to *The Economist*, she cites the actions of immensely high-performing Boston Consulting Group. By switching phones off and allotting offline time, groups worked together more productively and reduced burnout, writes the magazine's site.

Moore may not be surprised.

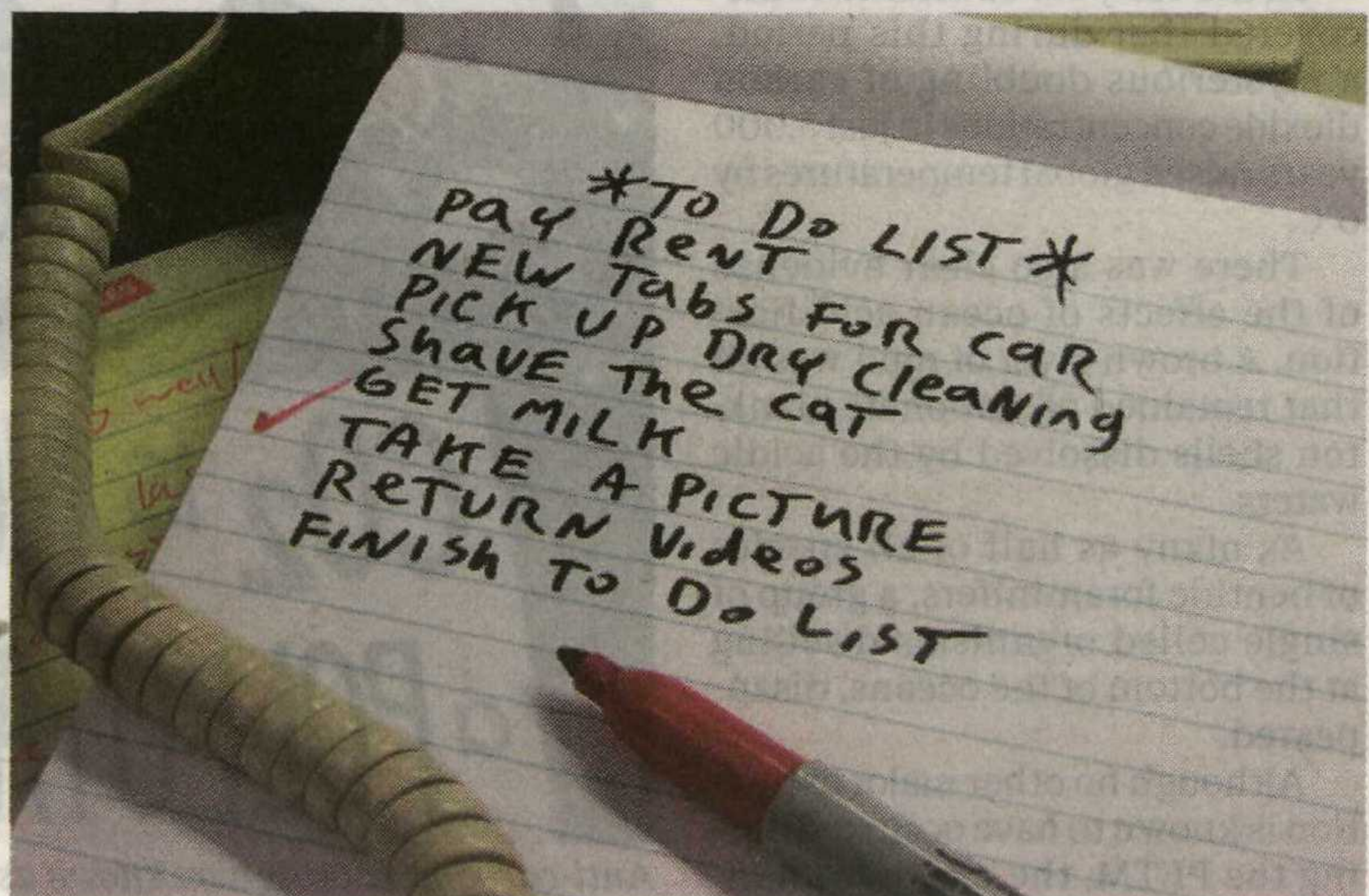
Daily Mail



We need to take a break from our **distractions**



Put the **phone down** and **exercise** so that you can focus on doing a few things well each day instead of doing many things poorly



A to-do list can make you even more distracted