

Earplugs — not just for sleeping anymore.

Jackhammers outside your window may be the least of your worries. Your phone rings, your email pings. When you need to concentrate, even the sound of your colleague's footsteps on the carpet, or the soft mechanical whirr of the rollers in the office printer, can stop you from getting things done.

In these cases, it's necessary — not rude — to find a way to blot out the noise. Stop up your ears and don't let anything intrude. Just get to work.

Of course there are other simple things you can do to maintain your concentration:

- Disable your email-checking schedule and manually get new mail when taking breaks through the day instead of letting each new message scream out for attention.
- Ditto your phone calls: send everything to voicemail while you're working.
- Use full-screen apps to help cut out the visual clutter in front of you.
- Write in a plain text document to stop worrying about format and concentrate on finding just the right words.

This is true for the big projects in your life as well as the small ones. When we're caught up in the day-to-day operations of our business — putting out this fire and impressing that client — we all lose focus on why we chose to do what we do. Taking a step back, tuning out distractions, and looking forward as far as possible — really, that's one of the great challenges of our lives.

We're reminded of all this because the water snake — the astrological symbol of the new lunar year — is a creature whose potential is limited only by its susceptibility to distraction. By cutting out extra sensory input, this sneaky serpent can hide in the grass with supreme patience, then spring out at precisely the right moment to catch its prey. When focused, it is nearly unstoppable.

What's the snake's secret?

No ears.

We're not saying you should go all Van Gogh on us, we're just offering you another tool to help you accomplish your goals.

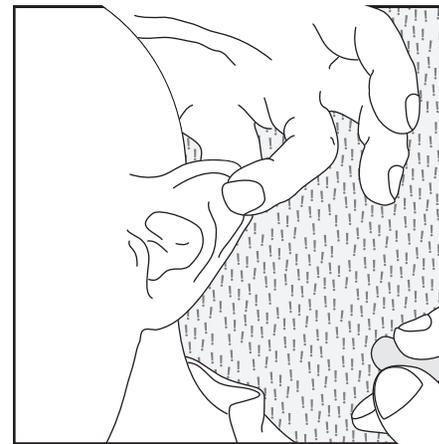
— The Team at Macktez

Ah, the joys of city living ...

We love cities for their vibrant, stochastic entropy. We love them for the way they cultivate distractions as productive interruptions — distractions that expand our attention and encourage us to entertain unlikely combinations.

But let's face it, sometimes distractions are just ... distractions. When you want to direct your attention onto one particular project, the right tools will help shut out the creaks and beeps around you and keep you on task.

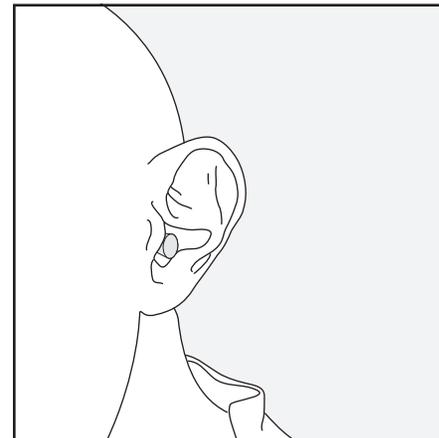
STEP ONE



So when you're faced with a day of unwanted interruptions, please consider using this pair of yellow earplugs.

It's easy! Just roll, squeeze, tug, etc. (Actually, we're a little too squeamish to get into the details, so if you've never done this before, please just read the instructions on the package.)

STEP TWO



Now, isn't that better?

Take a deep breath.

Focus.

Get things done.