

How to Use Caffeine & Coffee to Improve Focus | Dr. Andrew Huberman

I know many people are curious as to whether or not caffeine can improve focus and concentration. And indeed it can. There is an immense amount of data supporting the idea that caffeine, provided it's consumed in the appropriate dosages, can improve mental performance and physical performance. And it largely does that through improvements in focus and concentration. The dosage of caffeine, of course, is going to depend on how caffeine-adapted you are, how much caffeine tolerance you have, and that is going to vary tremendously depending on whether or not you ingest that caffeine with or without food, as I mentioned earlier. But there is a kind of general range in which we can talk about caffeine as being useful for focus and concentration. And the range is basically from 100 mg to 400 mg. I want to caution everybody out there if you're somebody who suffers from anxiety or panic attacks and you're not used to ingesting caffeine and you run out and ingest 400 mg of caffeine in the form of espresso or Yorba mate or an energy drink or in pill form, that is going to be very uncomfortable for you. You're going to be sweating profusely, your heart rate is going to increase, you're going to be quite panicked. Uh, in fact, or at least anxious. So be cautious with your use and adopting of caffeine if you're not already caffeine-adapted, but most people do quite well to ingest 100 to 200 mg of caffeine prior to doing some focused work. And again, I recommend delaying your caffeine intake to 90 to 100 and 20 minutes after waking, unless you are using that caffeine to really jolt your system. Uh, before a workout, caffeine can, of course, be ingested in various forms, even pill form, but most people ingest it in the form of coffee or my particular favorite way to ingest caffeine is Yorba mate. Um, it is important, and I should note that you should actively avoid the smoked versions of Yoruba Mate, as they contain a lot of carcinogenic, cancer-promoting compounds. There's some Great Yorba brands out there. The most cost-effective way to consume it would be to use the loose leaf tea and to pour water over that. There's one particular brand that I like. I don't have any affiliation to them whatsoever, but I've been using it for years. It's Anna Park. It's an organic brand that is sold. I buy mine on Amazon, but you can find it elsewhere on the internet as well. Again, I don't have any affiliation to them. It's just very cost-effective, very clean, it doesn't have the smoked flavor. At least the one that I buy is not the smoked variety. So none

of the carcinogenic compounds are in there At least that I'm aware of And I like the way it tastes and it provides a very even lift and and stimulant of that I think certainly works for me And that a number of people I know that I've suggested to also enjoy ya mate or caffeine also have other additional benefits In particular the caffeine in Yorba mate and coffee and other sources of caffeine are known to increase the density and efficacy That is the number and the function of dopamine receptors And this has been shown in humans several times So by ingesting caffeine pretty regularly you're actually increasing the ability of dopamine to have this effect of increasing motivation and drive I tend to ingest caffeine only early in the day I tend to cut off my caffeine intake somewhere around one or 2 p.m. to ensure that I can get into a good night's sleep But I realize that there are people out there that ingest caffeine as late as two or three in the afternoon and can still sleep fine I will caution those of you that think that you can drink caffeine in the evening or night time and still fall asleep All of the research points to the fact that the architecture of your sleep and the depth of your sleep is disrupted even if you're able to fall and stay asleep the sleep you're getting is simply not as good as the sleep you would get if you were to shut off your caffeine intake at least eight hours before bedtime And ideally more like 10 or even 12 hours before bedtime But of course there are practical constraints as well Ok So caffeine is increasing dopamines function by changing the number and efficacy of dopamine receptors But of course it also increases our wakefulness our alertness and that is largely through the neurochemical systems related to adenosine which is a molecule that builds up in our brain and body The longer we are awake it's part of the sleepiness system If you will makes us feel fatigued or tired And caffeine also operates on the epinephrine the adrenaline system In fact if we ingest too much caffeine we'll sometimes get the jitters Those jitters are really the sympathetic as it's called nervous systems bias toward movement And our pupils will dilate they actually get broader Now somewhat paradoxically when our pupils get bigger the pupils of our eyes that is our visual world actually narrows it becomes more tunnel like a lot of people don't realize this when our pupils are really small that means we are relaxed So if you ever see someone really tiny or you know pin sized pupils they are very relaxed If their pupils are very big they're very dilated Well then they are very amped up they're they are very very alert Caffeine increases alertness by increasing epinephrine adrenaline release both in the brain and within the body And so that's another way that it facilitates focus and concentration