

Daydreaming is not a wasted brain activity

Has anyone gotten upset with you because you weren't paying attention or accused you of having your head in the clouds, officially known as **daydreaming**? Well you now have brain science on your side.

Just to be clear here, we are talking about daydreaming while you are engaged in tasks that are routine or activities that don't demand your full attention.

Routine tasks are ingrained in your memory system and don't require a much thought. Think about how long you have been tying shoelaces and how many times have you actually tied them so far in your life? You don't know how many times, but you certainly do know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you know how.

Or, consider when you are a passenger in a car and your brain is free of the responsibility of driving. In both instances – routine tasks or activities not requiring your full attention allow your brain to meander off into daydreaming about any myriad of thoughts, ideas or possibilities.

The key question is what is happening in your brain while you're off daydreaming.

According to Jonathan Smallwood, of the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Science, **your brain is using your working memory resources to think about other things of a more important nature.** These thoughts might be about planning future activities, rehearsing what you will say, thinking about a problem or imagining how things would be different if Sometimes your brain is even working under the radar. You may be daydreaming and don't seem to be even thinking about anything at all, and then the creativity just starts to flow.

Researchers from the University of Wisconsin, Madison found that participants performing mundane tasks, who admitted to letting their mind

wander during the process, tested for a having a greater amount of working memory. Their brain performance was actually greater than those who paid more attention to what they were doing.

A greater amount of working memory means your brain can multiple-track. If your attention is required you can go back to the task or activity at hand, and then revert back thinking about other things.

Mothers are probably the best example of this. While doing the everyday things, their brain's are mentally planning, allocating, scheduling and coordinating things not only for their family but doing the same for their jobs as well.

No one says this is always done perfectly. But, if anyone does accuse you of not paying attention or daydreaming, tell them **research indicates daydreaming is an important brain activity reflecting your "overall higher" working memory.**

Go forth and daydream with peace of mind, science is there to back you up.

<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/03/19/daydreaming-is-good-for-mind/>