

Multitasking, so often considered a mark of mastery in the modern age, isn't quite what we think it is. "Multitasking," as it's used in common parlance, is somewhat of a misnomer: rather than performing multiple tasks simultaneously, the brain actually switches rapidly between tasks. And task-switching is an expensive habit that gobbles up extra processing power, rendering any attempt to "multitask" less efficient than simply concentrating on one task at a time.

Indeed, a 2009 study from Stanford discovered that frequent multitasking hurt cognitive performance. People labeled as "heavy media multitaskers"-those who consumed several forms of media at once, like texting while listening to music-were worse at attention tests. They also floundered on challenging working memory tests and scored lower on a task-switching assessment. The researchers postulated that frequent exposure to irrelevant stimuli made these "heavy" users less adept at filtering interference even when it mattered.

In a 2006 study from UCLA, researchers came up with a more ambiguous conclusion: multitasking didn't necessarily make you learn more poorly, just differently. They found that participants who learned a new task while exposed to a secondary task performed the learned behavior just as accurately-participants were simply unable to explain why, or access other explicit learned information. Multitasking seemed to make new learnings more akin to habit.

Finally, a lucky 2.5% of the population is actually capable of mastering multitasking: these "Supertaskers" experienced no drop in performance even when faced with a challenging driving simulation test, according to a study from 2010.

The takeaway: while multitasking is a misnomer, task switching and working memory are very real.

Leia mais: [Media multitaskers pay mental price, Stanford study shows](#)

Pode também ser do seu interesse: [Report - media multitasking - Stanford University](#)