

-(으)면서

while doing both at once

Puts two actions in the same moment, performed by the same person. That second condition is what separates it from every other "while" in Korean.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-면서	가다 → 가면서
Ends in a consonant	-으면서	먹다 → 먹으면서
Ends in ㄹ	ㄹ stays	만들다 → 만들면서
이다, adjectives	contrast sense	학생이면서
Written variant	-(으)며	일하며 공부해요
Different subjects take	-는 동안	제가 자는 동안

WHEN TO USE IT

Attachment is the standard rule and ㄹ stays: 가면서, 먹으면서, 만들면서. Tense never appears in front of it — the final verb carries it.

The subject must be the same in both clauses. 밥을 먹으면서 텔레비전을 봐요 works because one person does both. If two different people are acting at the same time, Korean uses -는 동안 instead.

With adjectives and 이다 it shifts from simultaneity to contrast, closer to "while being": 학생이면서 회사에 다녀요. The written variant -(으)며 means the same thing and appears in formal prose.

IN USE

- 1 밥을 먹으면서 텔레비전을 봐요.
I watch TV while eating.
- 2 음악을 들으면서 공부해요.
I study while listening to music.
- 3 저녁을 만들면서 전화를 받았어요.
I took a call while making dinner.
- 4 웃으면서 인사했어요.
She greeted me with a smile.
- 5 그 사람은 학생이면서 회사에 다녀요.
He's a student and also works at a company.
- 6 걸어가면서 이야기할까요?
Shall we talk as we walk?

COMPARED WITH

-고

-고 puts actions in a row; -(으)면서 has them overlapping. Swapping them changes the timeline entirely.

밥을 먹고 텔레비전을 봤어요. (ate, then watched) / 밥을 먹으면서 텔레비전을 봤어요. (both at once)

-는 동안

-는 동안 allows two different subjects and treats the first clause as a stretch of time. It is the form you need when someone else is doing the other action.

제가 요리하면서 노래했어요. (I cooked and sang) / 제가 요리하는 동안 동생이 청소했어요. (my sibling cleaned while I cooked)

-(으)며

The same ending in written register. In speech it sounds stiff; in reports and articles it is standard.

일하면서 공부해요. (speech) / 일하며 학업을 병행한다. (writing)

WATCH OUT

X 제가 요리하면서 동생이 청소했어요.

O 제가 요리하는 동안 동생이 청소했어요.

-(으)면서 requires one subject for both clauses. With two different people, use -는 동안.

X 저녁을 만들으면서 전화했어요.

O 저녁을 만들면서 전화했어요.

A stem ending in ㅁ keeps it and adds nothing, exactly as with plain -(으)면.

X 밥을 먹었으면서 텔레비전을 봤어요.

O 밥을 먹으면서 텔레비전을 봤어요.

Tense never sits before this ending. The past is carried by the final verb.