

How to Study Better

Studying well takes focus of attention and an excitement for learn the subject, both which may not be present while having to study. So how can you prep yourself for the task?

Steps

1. Get a good night's sleep. Being tired is a distraction.
2. Eat properly. Protein is the proper nutrition to keep carb-addicts from falling asleep. Add vitamins via salad fixings and you can become alert for the work ahead. If you really need to, drink an energy drink before studying.
3. Get in shape. If you are not fit, start getting fit, by just walking, at first, and then continue into strength-building, aerobics and flexibility exercises, such as yoga and pilates. This should be done as suggested, at least 3 times a week, minimum of 30 minutes, but preferably 30-60 minutes a day of alternate physical concentration. After every 30 minutes of mental concentration, get up and do something physical, a few minutes of jumping rope, throwing the ball, standing on your head, whatever.
4. Get comfortable. Find a comfortable place to study and make sure you've eaten, gone to the bathroom, and done anything else you need to do.
5. Get rid of the distractions and get yourself immersed in the subject at hand. (Easier said than done, but you can get interested in the subject matter without thinking about your problems, etc., if it is interesting in the first place.) Distractions include cell phones, TV's and radios, the internet (unless absolutely necessary), and people who like to talk to you or around you.
6. Have a deadline. If you don't have one, make one.
7. Give yourself a reward. Sometimes you get the reward first, then do the work that you were supposed to do for that reward. Or wait till you have read a chapter/done a problem/whatever is on your list, then give yourself a reward.
8. Know that this too (the studying) will end and you can then get a life.

Tips

- Everyone has a different studying style and some tips would include highlighting, outlining, making flashcards, taking notes according to categories, and then memorizing those notes and categories, all depending on the subject matter. Review the material through the notes you have made, reading over that which you have forgotten. Taking good notes is essential. You can't rely on your memory. See the How to Get Straight A's notations.
- Studying with a partner who is as serious about the subject as you can be a good motivator to work harder. Organize the study session into parts, review notes outline chapter, discuss concepts (try to teach it to each other so that you are sure you both get it.)
- Try to break formulas and concepts into mnemonics to help you remember the concepts, for example if one wants to remember the notes of the treble cleff in music the mnemonic Every Good Boy Does Fine= E, G, B, D, F.

- Where a chapter or subject lends itself to 4-6 different categories of information, write out a 3x5 index card with questions on one side and answers on the other. Put one question from each category on one side of the card and the corresponding answer on the other side. Then invite some friends from the class over to play History Trivial Pursuit. Same rules, your index cards.
- Use graphic organizers (GOs) to organize the information that you want to study. Use the concept map, cause and effect diagrams, event organizers depending on what content you want to study. Check out <http://www.graphic.org> for some useful graphic organizers and how to use them. Print some GOs from http://www.edhelper.com/teachers/graphic_organizers.htm to start you off.
- If you have problems concentrating, talk to your teacher or professor. You may have a deeper issue and he or she can help.
- Do your homework -- you'll remember more.
- Music is ok, but keep it at a low volume.
- Your attitude greatly helps the outcome of your studying: if you're mad at the world, you won't really care much about biology, and likewise, if you're so excited you can't breathe, you are not going to want to sit down and read about the Mesopotamian Era. Think about that and try to regulate your moods when it's time to hit the books (e.g. don't sign on to instant messaging to talk with your friends about that cute new guy ten minutes before you have to study the table of elements).

Warnings

- Studying could get addictive. The more you study successfully, the more you find you would like to and you may never leave school, becoming a perennial student till your dying days.
- Being a perennial student may not be so bad after all, considering that a successful life demands that you be a student of it.
- Watch out for inclinations to procrastinate until the last moment. All your efforts will not lead to success and you'll end up blaming your tools.
- Avoid using food as a reward.

Things You'll Need

- A quiet room with plenty of air and light, and which allows little if any interruptions.
- A clock with an alarm in case you are writing sample essays that need to be timed

How to Ace Your Next Test

There's nothing like getting a test back and seeing an "A" on the top of the page. Here's how you can make it happen.

Steps

1. Study ahead of time. Don't put it off until the last minute. If you hold off until the night before or, even worse, that morning, you're less likely to retain all of the material because of stress.
2. Prepare for pop quizzes. Read the material (even though you don't want to) for 15 minutes every night - just in case.
3. Take notes on the material. Focus on concepts, definitions, and formulas that you think will be on the test.
4. Ask your teacher for help, both before and during the exam. Ask him or her what you should focus on while studying. Or, if you don't understand a question on the test, ask your teacher to clarify. Perhaps he or she will give you a study packet.
5. Take deep breaths while you're taking the test. Stay calm and pace yourself. When you're relaxed, you can remember things more easily.
6. You don't have to do the test in the order it is written. Work easy problems first to build your confidence and calm yourself down. When coming back to the tough questions, you will know you have at least made a decent grade, and you know how long you have left.
7. Have your test-taking materials ready. You're already nervous, so the last thing you want to do is freak out if you can't find your pencil or pen.
8. Read the questions carefully and at least twice, in case you missed something before. Don't rush. If possible read the entire exam before beginning to work. This will give you an idea of what's in store and help you manage your time better. It also prevents any nasty surprises with only minutes left.
9. Look over your answers thoroughly when you're done and make sure you didn't make any mistakes. You might remember something more to add to the question as well.

Tips

- When you take notes, try to write in shorthand. Write simply. Instead of writing "The plant draws water from the soil and oxygen and sunlight from the atmosphere so that it can perform photosynthesis", write: "Plant gets H₂O from dirt & O + sun from atm. --> photosynthesis." Not only will this help you take notes more efficiently, but it will also be easier to remember.
- The day before the test, make a study aid with a summary of everything and look it over on your way to school.
- For many people it is better to never study the day before a test, because that day is when all the information you know organizes itself in your brain. You may or may not be this type of person; if you are you should not even think about the test or any related material exactly 24 hours before the test until it starts.

- When you're reading material, skim through it first, and then read it thoroughly. After you're done, summarize what you've read in 1-5 sentences without looking at the text. This does wonders for helping you retain knowledge.
- If a test question leaves you stumped, just skip it and come back to it later. You're better off spending your time on questions you know the answers to first.
- When studying for a larger test/exam, study only for 1 hour at a time, then take a 10 min break- but don't play video games during the break, as they make it harder to learn.
- This may not work for everyone, but chewing gum works wonders for concentration and stress. Careful though, some teachers don't like to see gum in their classrooms!
- Get a tutor.

Warnings

- Get 8 hours of sleep. If you're tired, you won't be able to concentrate.
- Have a healthy breakfast. Hunger pains and a growling stomach will hurt your chances of getting an A.
- Stress causes your body to release a chemical called cortisol, which can block your brain's ability to recall facts and memories. So, the most important thing is to stay calm and relaxed. Remember that if you don't do well on this test, it's not the end of the world.

How to Get Straight A's

Everyone who has been through it knows that getting straight A's is not a mystery, and you don't have to be Einstein to do it. As anything else in life though, it does require effort, determination, and positive thinking.

Steps

1. Read your lesson prior to the class. You don't have to study it and memorize it, just read it to have a notion of the topic in class, and to prepare the questions for the teacher to clarify.
2. Take good class notes. Don't write everything the teacher says, just enough bullets or headlines to remind you of the class discussions and significant points.
3. After the lecture or class, always spend approximately 3 hours reading your class notes, and reading the material from the book. This is crucial as books are usually written by subject experts and are more extensive and better prepared than the teacher's materials presented during class.
4. Do the exercises at the end of the book. This is the best way to prove to yourself that you understand the material.
5. Find a quiet place, like your room, lock the door, and imagine you are the teacher explaining the subject to a student. This is also a good way to measure your understanding of the material. If you can participate in tutoring programs in school, this serves the same purpose.

6. Be proactive in participating in study groups. To deepen our understanding of a particular subject, it is sometimes beneficial to hear other people's perspectives and explanations. This sometimes helps clarify topics that we may misunderstand or not fully understand.
7. Never stay up late the night before a test. If you are not prepared by the prior evening, chances are you will not get an A, and pulling an all-nighter will only tire you and hamper your focus during the test.
8. The human body learns best at specific times (usually in the morning). Be sure you save this time for studying and internalizing important class materials, and reserve the other time for less pensive activities as homework or socializing. Avoid studying when you are tired. In general, you should try to get at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
9. Eat a good breakfast, or at least something healthy in the morning.
10. Pay attention! You won't learn much if you don't.
11. Spend a reasonable amount of time on your assignments. Assignments done at the last minute or poorly will not help you much. Also, they won't reflect your skills as a student and probably will lower your grade.
12. Do your homework. A lot of your mark is based on whether you do your homework and whether you have a good attitude. Chances are, if you do your homework, you'll do better on tests, too. Doing homework does not mean only doing assignments that are going to be collected or graded. For example if the teacher asks for you to read a section of the textbook, there is a reason for it, and doing all of your homework includes doing every assigned task and taking notes on reading whether it is required or not. This is the most important step to achieving an A in the class. Since you will always be prepared for class, pop-quizes, and it will significantly decrease the amount of time you need to study. For example, if you do this in mathematics class, you will often find that you will not need more than a 10-minute review of the formulas/concepts and that's it!

Tips

- The right attitude will help a lot. Some people are amazingly intelligent, but because they just don't care they end up making lower grades.
- Ultimately you're looking to get a job. Employers and colleges are increasingly looking for extra-curricular skills and activities, not just academic ones. Work hard, but make time for other things as well. The same principles of learning academics apply to learner sports. 95% of professional athletes practiced their sport for an average of 8 hours a day when they were in high school. No one is born being amazing at anything (though some offspring of great athletes might disagree). Whether it's the tennis team or the chess club champion, hard-work can make you the best in your area.
- If you are failing or don't understand something, try talking to the teacher. The teacher is one of the best resources for help in class. Another possibility is a tutor. Many successful students have tutors even in their best subject! This is so that they can raise their A's to A+'s! Having a tutor is no shame and it is certain that many of the top students at your local schools probably use tutors.
- All nighters are your friends. Don't be afraid to burn the midnight oil if you don't have something done. It is almost always better to turn an assignment in on time that might

not be its best due to working late, than turning it in late. On the flip side, staying up all night before an exam can be detrimental, and caffeine can only go so far.

Warnings

- It is not worth dying over. You should definitely work at it, but it's important to realize when something's not realistic. It is a far better use of time to develop a different skill.
- If being top of the class is the only thing that matters to you, you need to stop and think. You probably won't always be the best, and when that happens, you need to have something else that makes you happy. That can be anything from sports to music to stamp collecting, as long as it isn't only your grades that define you. However, studying hard and doing *all* of the tasks that are asked of you for homework will lead you to be near the top of your class, and will certainly lead you down a successful path in terms of getting into an elite college, but also if you learn to work hard, you will be a success in life; which is technically the only benefit of being top of the class anyway.
- Slacking off for one day can ruin your progress. Take this scenario as an example. Your history assignment is to read a chapter of the book, which the teacher says you'll talk about the next day in class. You take the liberty of having a day off of history homework, and find out that you have a pop-quiz the next day on it! Then on the test, you find out that half the questions were on that reading assignment! Another problem with slacking off for one day is that it leads you down a road of more slacking. That one bad day becomes a week, then a month, then finally the entire term. It's important to get in the habit of doing work every day.
- Individuals with learning disabilities will need to make use of additional resources and spend more time studying to accomplish the same goal.