

Top tips for effective studying



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1. Location is everything.

The best environment in which to study is one that closely resembles the test environment. Any room with another purpose (e.g. bedroom or kitchen) has inherent distractions and will lower your retention. Do your best to find a well-lit room with a desk and chair and designate it as your study room.

2. Control the flow of information.

Break your studying into chunks. As a rule of thumb, you should review your notes for no more than 45 minutes and then pause for five to 10 minutes. During this break, reflect on what you were studying, have a healthy snack or get up and move around. Avoid distractions such as TV or social media as this will disrupt the study momentum you have created.

3. Timing is everything.

The most effective time of day to study can vary from person to person. Determine what works best for you and make a point of scheduling a consistent study time.

4. Distractions be gone!

Distractions come in all shapes and sizes. There are external distractions (e.g. cell phones, computers and people) and internal distractions that we create within ourselves. The first step is to identify the distraction then you can eliminate it.

5. Incorporate assessment.

Once you have reviewed your notes thoroughly enough that you feel confident in remembering all the information, challenge yourself. Use your textbook's end-of-chapter questions or other resources to do a review or try to anticipate your own test questions and answer them.

6. Have a study plan and stick to it.

Study plans are extremely beneficial, not only during midterm and exam time but throughout the entire semester. Add study time to your agenda and choose the times strategically so that you will stick to your plan.

7. Study groups: friend or foe?

It is highly recommended to form a group of peers with whom you can review class topics on a weekly basis. Group study before a midterm or final exam, however, is not encouraged, as you should stick to your own personal study goals.

8. Use graphic organizers for summarizing.

Using a graphic organizer is a fantastic way to quickly squeeze large amounts of information into a small space. It also provides a visual display, makes it easier to see relationships between main ideas and allows you to grasp the big picture.

9. Review your notes daily.

The key to remembering information is to repeat it over and over. As a rule of thumb, you should review your class notes no longer than 24 hours after class and you should repeat this for three or four days.

10. Use the academic supports available.

Visit Student Academic Learning Services for more information about study techniques that will work for you.