

7 Tips for Successful Studying



Tip #1



A fact often overlooked is
studying begins in the classroom.



So...

Take rigorous notes.

Handwrite your notes instead of typing or recording; you will retain more information. Draw pictures; create your own abbreviations. Your notes don't have to be pretty, but they do have to be coherent and legible.

Tip #2

After taking notes, review them.

If you have a textbook or instructor provided material, supplement your handwritten notes with information from the text or extra material.

Your notes should include information compiled from reading your text, taking notes in class, and the reviewing you do after class.

Tip #3

Do more than just read your textbook. You won't retain much just reading.



Annotate as you read.

Skim the reading for relevant info and abbreviate in your notes.

This is not wasting your time...
this is not prepping for studying...
This is studying!

You can use these notes when reviewing right before an exam, and if the notes are done well, you won't have to return to your textbook!

Tip #4

This might seem obvious, but people take it for granted: listen to your teacher or professor.

When he or she says something a few times, make a note.

They write your tests, or at the very least they know what's on them.

If your instructor repeats herself, she might be giving a hint as to what is important.

And follow up with your teacher if you have questions. Showing an interest in the course work early and often (even if you have to act a bit) creates a more cooperative relationship with your teacher.



Tip #5

Each subject must be approached slightly differently.

You can't prepare for a math test the same way you do a history exam.



Although, bio and lit exams cover entirely different material, how you begin studying from day one is identical in both classes. And generally, practice questions are a great go-to for ongoing or night-before studying.

A quick Google search will bring up a quiz or practice test on a chapter or concept.



Tip #6

Some old-fashioned things still work.

Make flashcards—not on an app... write them out!



Studies have shown we retain more when we write than when we type. And practically, a piece of paper or note card cannot distract the way a screen will.

Ask someone to quiz you or ask if you could teach the material to someone. Attempting to explain something to another person gives you the truest measure of your mastery of the material.

Tip #7

Reconsider your definition of studying. Two analogies:

You can't fast all week long, eat 12,000 calories in a single day and not expect to be malnourished, ill, or both.

You can't expect to be entirely sedentary, workout 30 minutes a week, and achieve your ideal physique. This is apparent to most everyone.

So...

Why do we think our brain wouldn't need to be fed and worked out regularly?

If you treat studying more like eating, you won't have to cram, you'll be more confident before exams, and this will reflect in your grades.

One more thing...

No one needs to study for hours on end. When you are sitting down for a study session, set a timer for a reasonable and manageable period of time, 30 to 45 minutes is a good place to start.

Read, annotate, and review without distractions. Work until the timer goes off. Then take a break, check your phone, or have a snack. If you do this 4 times throughout the week, you will have actually studied for at least 2 hours!