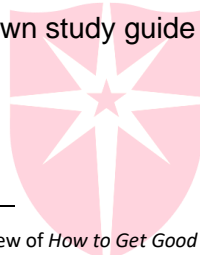


# Study Skills

# 10 Ways to Study Smarter

You've heard the old saying, "work smarter, not harder." Applying this concept to studying will make you a more productive student. To do this, you must develop effective study skills and learning strategies. Here are ten ways to study smarter, not harder.

1. Get organized.
  - a. Get a notebook and folder for every class
  - b. Have all your materials at hand when studying
  - c. Keep track of long- and short-term projects in a planner, on a schedule, whiteboard, to-do list
2. Don't miss class.
  - a. Find your motivation - why are you in college? Going to class is a big predictor of success.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Set an alarm - reminders to go to class, and for waking up.
  - c. Know yourself - what causes you to skip class? Hanging out with friends? Sleeping in? Address that problem head-on. Adjust your priorities.
3. Review your notes quickly and often.
  - a. After a lecture class, take 10 minutes to review your notes while it's fresh
  - b. Review again later that same day, then again the following day
  - c. See the *Spaced Practice* handout for a better understanding
4. Read to learn, learn to read.
  - a. Scan the headings first
  - b. Then read the intro section and the last paragraph or so (or summary if one exists)
  - c. Highlight keywords and definitions
  - d. Turn the headings into questions and look for the answer as you read
  - e. Turn the questions and answers into notes or a summary
5. Summarize lectures and readings in your own words.
  - a. Memorization can be good for concrete information - formulas, vocabulary, dates, etc.
  - b. True understanding requires you to be able to phrase information for yourself
  - c. By summarizing lectures and readings in your own words, you take the first step in understanding
6. Create study tools.
  - a. Take your new knowledge and create study tools:
  - b. Outlines, timelines, mind maps, concept maps
  - c. Flash cards, self-made study guides
  - d. See Study Skills handouts for more ideas and how-tos
7. Test yourself.
  - a. Use the study tools you've created.
  - b. At the end of a study session (30-60 mins) write down what you can remember (see *Retrieval Practice* hand for more information)
  - c. Create your own study guide (see *How to Create Your Own Study Guide* handout)



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<sup>1</sup> U.S. News and World Report. 2022. Review of *How to Get Good Grades in College*. Edited by Cole Claybourn. November 3, 2022.  
<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-to-get-good-grades-in-college>.

# Study Skills

# 10 Ways to Study Smarter

8. Participate in study groups.
  - a. Start one if there isn't one already
    - i. Ask 3 or 4 classmates around you (should not be more than 5)
    - ii. Set a date, time, and location
    - iii. Come to the meeting with a bit of an agenda and start by setting goals
    - iv. Figure out the logistics of meeting again
  - b. By "teaching" each other, you have to rephrase the information which requires understanding.
  - c. It's a way for you and your peers to help each other fill-in gaps in knowledge.<sup>2</sup>
9. Put your phone down.
  - a. We all know that smartphones can be distracting. What you might not know is that your proximity to your phone can matter.
  - b. A 2017 study by the University of Texas showed that having your phone in your pocket/bag or on your desk/table (even facedown) can negatively impact your working memory and functional fluid intelligence.
  - c. The study suggests silencing your phone (including turning off the vibration feature) and putting it in a different room.<sup>3</sup>
  - d. Use study breaks to check your device before you refocus.
10. Practice true self care.
  - a. Good brain food includes fish, nuts, blueberries, and yogurt
  - b. 7 hours of sleep is the bare minimum humans need
    - i. Shorting yourself on sleep can reduce your performance physically and mentally by up to 30%
    - ii. Reaching R.E.M. sleep helps with learning - your brain replays new information and processes rapidly during R.E.M. sleep, which increases retention
    - iii. Things like drugs and alcohol inhibit R.E.M. sleep, avoid them<sup>4</sup>
  - c. Oxygen helps your memory and concentration, if you're stuck, go outside for a short walk
  - d. Take care of your mental health - exercise, sleep, seek support if needed

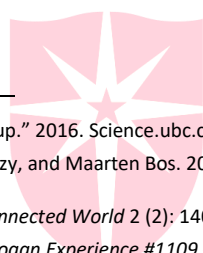
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<sup>2</sup> "Tips for Starting a Successful Study Group." 2016. Science.ubc.ca. July 21, 2016. <https://science.ubc.ca/students/blog/study-groups>.

<sup>3</sup> Ward, Adrian, Kristen Duke, Ayelet Gneezy, and Maarten Bos. 2017. Review of *Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive*

*Capacity. The Consumer in a Connected World* 2 (2): 140–54. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/691462>.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, Matthew. 2018. Review of *Joe Rogan Experience #1109 - Matthew Walker* Interview by Joe Rogan. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwaWlIO\\_Pig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwaWlIO_Pig).



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