

## Study Skills

# The Pomodoro Technique

Study time needs to be study time. Minimizing distractions and maximizing focus can be the difference between productivity and wasting time. Finding a specific location with limited distractions is one important step.<sup>1</sup>

To make study time effective, you need to concentrate, but there are so many distractions - friends, phone, email, games, etc. The Pomodoro Technique can help maintain concentration and can help keep you from getting mentally fatigued.

The best part about the Pomodoro Technique? It's simple.

Step 1     Select one of your tasks

Step 2     Set a 25-minute timer

Step 3     Work on your task until the time is up  
Full concentration - Notifications off, phone away, don't worry about what music is playing, etc.

Step 4     Take a 5 minute break (you've completed 1 pomodoro)

Step 5     Every 4 pomodoros, take a longer break: 15-30 minutes

Each pomodoro is like a concentration sprint, and they're at the center of the technique. There are 3 rules to make sure each 25 minute chunk is as effective as possible:

**Break down large assignments.** If you have a large assignment to do, make sure it can be done within 4 pomodoros. If it takes longer than that to complete, it's too big to do all at once (see How to Break Down Large Assignments handout). Break it into smaller pieces that can be done within 4 pomodoros.

**Group small tasks.** If a task takes less than one pomodoro, group it with another small task or two. For example, if your to-do list includes: check my syllabus, write a thesis statement, and make an appointment with a librarian, do them all in one pomodoro.

**Once the timer is set, it must ring.** One pomodoro is like the number zero. It cannot be divided into smaller parts. Once you start the timer, you must "sprint" (do the selected task(s)). It cannot be broken, especially for small talk, snaps, emails, etc. Total focus until the timer rings.



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<sup>1</sup> "9 Simple Productivity Tips for College Students." n.d. Wwww.apu.edu. <https://www.apu.edu/articles/9-simple-productivity-tips-for-college-students/>.