

Studying 101: You Don't Know Jack – Learning How to Study

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Studying— an important part of any college course. Some of us love it and many of us don't. But often the most difficult part of it all is how to study. You can always re-read the material or look at your notes but at the end of the day, did you really retain anything?

Here are a few tips of mine on learning how to study:

- 1. Put your phone away.** We all love being on our phone, but your phone is not your best friend when it comes down to getting a good grade. Turn your phone off or tuck it away in your backpack. It will only be a distraction to you. Try to set up a break or reward system for yourself, say for example, that you can check your phone once every hour for a 15-minute break!
- 2. Start early!** Procrastination is not the key to studying. You simply cannot get through and remember all of the information you need by cramming the night before an exam. Start at least a week before your exam or quiz, not the day before.

3. Split up the material. The worst thing you can do is cram your brain with 10 chapters worth of information in one day. For example, if your exam is based on 10 chapters and you start a week early, you can designate 2 (or 3) chapters per day which totals to 5 days, and then use the remaining 2 days to review the material all over again. Starting a week and a half earlier would also be helpful as it will give you more time to review areas where you're not so confident in.

- » **In the case of multiple exams around the same time, start even earlier!** Use a calendar and designate which chapters and courses should be studied on which days. Not only does this give you a visual of what you must do, it will keep you organized and focused.

4. Annotate your notes. Don't just read the material, try to understand it.

- » **Skim the material** so your brain can familiarize itself with the outline or scope of information
- » **Next, dive in!** Avidly take notes. Ask questions and rephrase paragraphs or sentences in your own words to help you understand the material.
- » **Writing your notes down** instead of typing will better help you to retain the information. Personally, I write my notes first, then type my notes up on my laptop. This helps my brain retain the information a lot better.

5. Practice, Practice, Practice. If you're studying for a course that requires problem-solving, practicing is the way to go. Continuously expose yourself to problems and attempt to apply the concepts behind it. Solely memorizing how to solve a problem may not help you. You must try to learn the concepts behind the problem. Find out why you solved a problem incorrectly. This will help you be better prepared for more complex questions or problems on an exam.

6. Verbally relay the information to a friend or to yourself. By explaining the information to a friend or to yourself aloud, it enhances your understanding of the material and increases your retention.

7. Studying techniques are trial-and-error. Remember, studying techniques are personal. What may help you may not work for someone else and vice versa. Since no one studies the same way, try experimenting! It takes time to find the right method of how to study that suits you best and at times it can be frustrating. Continue to try different approaches and if one doesn't feel like it's working, move on to a different one. You can even mix and match some techniques up to make your very own study method.

About the Author

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