

Suggested Methods for Studying

These are not necessarily in chronological order. Some will work for you, some will not. It takes time and some practice to figure out the best study strategy for you, for each class. Try them out, use what works best for you (including strategies not listed here!)

1) Identify your best learning strategy. Are you a visual learner? Auditory? Not sure? Find out here:

<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml?event=results&A=9&V=5&T=6>

2) Gather information from class - notes, slides, textbook highlights, and rephrase them into your own words. Consider re-writing your notes to help retain the information. You can use a whiteboard, or even use whiteboard markers on a mirror.

3) Consider getting together in a small group (2-3 people) and reviewing the concepts together. One of the best ways to learn, is to teach the information to others. This helps you synthesize concepts and put them into your own words, which will help them make more sense to you. Doing this in a small group will provide feedback and give you other words to help you remember the concepts.

4) Identify your study space. Do you need solitude? Music in the background? People around you? If possible, check in with the Service Center to see if there's a time where our classroom is available for you to study in - reviewing the information in the space where you'll take the exam and help decrease test-day anxiety. You can also use the whiteboard in there to write and re-write the material to your heart's content. Check in with Jessica and Louise in the Service Center before you show up - they can help you find a space and a time to use this strategy.

If you're someone that likes to study with music, try reviewing without music to help you prepare for the silence that will be in the room during the actual quiz/exam. Another strategy is to listen to the same album or playlist, that way you can recall it during the exam and simulate the experience you have outside of the classroom.

Do not study in the room that you sleep in. There is a large body of research indicating that working, doing homework, and studying in the space that you sleep in is detrimental to your sleep health. Your sleeping space should only be used for sleep. Just like you need a "study sanctuary", you also need a "sleep sanctuary" and these need to be separate. Carefully and thoughtfully curate each of these spaces to meet your needs as best you can.

5) Practice mindful moments as you study. Make them part of your academic routine. Getting ready to read a new chapter? Take a mindful moment. Struggling with a concept? Close the book, take a mindful moment, and come back to you. There are a wide variety of mindfulness strategies and guided meditations, and you're welcome to explore these and take your pick of

what works best for you. A helpful app may be Prana Breath - you can customize the guided breathing to best fit your physical and mental health needs.

6) Flash cards. Flash cards are the key to survival in academia. You can make physical flash cards, or e-flash cards. These help you recall information that you've already taken in, and in some ways, simulate what the quiz/exam will be like. A helpful tip is to include what chapter, maybe even what page concepts are on so you can review them in the textbook if you're really stuck on them.

7) Use the Pomodoro strategy. Pomodoro is the Italian word for "tomato". The strategy is named this because it was formalized using a kitchen timer, which happened to be a tomato. It's simple, and incredibly effective (I use this all the time!) Set a timer for 15-20 minutes - this will be the amount of time that you focus on one particular concept, diagram, or chapter. When the time is complete, set another timer for 5 minutes. This is your break. Check social media, get a snack, go to the bathroom, walk around, roll on the floor, whatever you do to de-stress or tend to other things for 5 minutes. When that 5 minutes is over, resume the 15-20 minutes of focus. This helps break the idea of studying into manageable chunks without exhausting your brain, and has a built in reward (a break!), which helps with motivation. You can download the free Pomodoro app on your phone, or use any sort of timer.

8) Visualize success. Rehearse affirming statements. "I can do this. I can slow down, take deep breaths, and get through this. I've studied, attended class, and am active in my learning. I have what it takes to do well on this." Imagine yourself taking the quiz/exam with a calm body and mind. When we practice visualizing success, we're tempted to rush to the end and picture finishing the test - being done with the test isn't the hard part, taking it is! Imagine sitting in the desk - your feet pushing into the floor, your seat bones on the hardness of the seat, your spine against the back of the hard chair. Now that you're visualizing yourself in the room, imagine that you're taking the test. As you read a question, your body is calm. You're paying attention to each word. As you're halfway through the question, you're recalling the textbook, your notes, the slides. You read the answer options for the question, and choose the best one. You circle it and move onto the next. It may feel silly or odd to use this type of strategy at first, and it's one that takes practice, just like mindful moments and meditation. Stick with it, and customize it to fit your needs.

9) Don't forget to move! We spend so much time sitting, and the human body is not intended to be so static. Go for a walk, do some stretches or yoga, play a basketball or soccer game with friends, maybe even consider joining a club on campus to help make it part of your regular routine. It doesn't have to take a lot of time, even 5 or 10 minutes of movement while you're studying can help retain information (increases circulation and blood flow to your brain and helps serve as a grounding exercise, too - our anxiety gets worse when we're stuck in the cognitive functioning of our minds. Exercise helps our brain with proprioception, the awareness of our body in the physical space around us. This is also why we practice bringing awareness to our feet, sit bones, spine, and breath before we start class). One of my personal favorites is Yoga

with Adrienne (Youtube channel) because I can pick how long, how intense, where, and when I use these skills. There's even a short yoga practice that can be done at your desk/in a chair. Please modify physical activity to meet your current ability level - the goal is not strength training or weight loss, simply to increase circulation and increase proprioceptive awareness.

Yoga with Adrienne Youtube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFKE7WVJfvaHW5q283SxchA>

10) Define success for **you**. It would be lovely if we could all ace our exams with no problems or anxiety, but this is not possible in the human experience. Is success for you making it through the exam without panicking? Is it centered around a grade? How can you create a reasonable and realistic goal for success? This is unique to each student, and is something you'll need to discover for yourself. You can always stop by during office hours for help with this.

Here are some links to videos that you may find helpful:

"Study Less, Study Smart", created by a medical school student:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2_2UGeGL9M

5 Minute Guided Meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR57rug8NsM>

Visualizing Success, Building Confidence, Normalizing Test Anxiety:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtF0T2fPvbl>

Academic Skills from the University of Melbourne, Youtube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaJD4vYNav5Zub15lyplZ0g>

The Pomodoro Technique (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNBmG24djoY>

Memorization Techniques:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcN4LcjLFd4>

The Feynman Technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YU9jQV2Mp64>