

Study Skills

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Is my Study Place available to me whenever I need it?

Your Study Place does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If you are using a Study Place that you must share with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.

Is my Study Place free from interruptions?

It is important to have uninterrupted study time. You may have to hang a **DO NOT DISTURB** sign on the door or take the phone off the hook.

Is my Study Place free from distractions?

Research shows that most students study best in a quiet environment. If you find that playing a stereo or TV improves your mood, keep the volume low.

Does my Study Place contain all the study materials I need?

Be sure your Study Place includes [reference sources](#) and supplies such as pens and pencils, paper, ruler, calculator, and whatever else you might need. If you use a computer for your schoolwork, it should be in your Study Place .

Does my Study Space contain a large enough desk or table?

While working on an assignment or studying for a test, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.

Does my Study Place have enough storage space?

You need enough room to store your study materials. Be sure you have enough storage space to allow you to keep your desktop or other work surface clear of unnecessary materials that can get in the way.

Does my Study Place have a comfortable chair?

A chair that is not comfortable can cause discomfort or pain that will interfere with your studying. A chair that is too comfortable might make you sleepy. Select a chair in which you can sit for long periods while maintaining your attention.

Does my Study Place have enough light?

The amount of light you need depends on what you are doing. The important thing is that you can clearly see what you need to see without any strain or discomfort.

Does my Study Place have a comfortable temperature?

If your Study Place is too warm, you might become sleepy. If it is too cold, your thinking may slow down and become unclear. Select a temperature at which your mind and body function best.

Procrastination

What is Procrastination?

Procrastination is putting off or avoiding doing something that must be done. It is natural to procrastinate occasionally. However, excessive procrastination can result in guilt feelings about not doing a task when it should be done. It can also cause anxiety since the task still needs to be done. Further, excessive procrastination can cause poor performance if the task is completed without sufficient time to do it well. In short, excessive procrastination can interfere with school and personal success.

Why Do Students Procrastinate?

- ❑ *Perfectionism.* A student's standard of performance may be so high for a task that it does not seem possible to meet that standard.
 - ❑ *Fear of Failure.* A student may lack confidence and fear that he/she will be unable to accomplish a task successfully.
 - ❑ *Confusion.* A student may be unsure about how to start a task or how it should be completed.
 - ❑ *Task Difficulty.* A student may lack the skills and abilities needed to accomplish a task.
 - ❑ *Poor Motivation.* A student may have little or no interest in completing a task because he/she finds the task boring or lacking in relevance.
 - ❑ *Difficulty Concentrating.* A student may have too many things around that distract him/her from doing a task.
 - ❑ *Task Unpleasantness.* A student may dislike doing what a task requires.
 - ❑ *Lack of Priorities.* A student may have little or no sense about which tasks are most important to do.
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How Do I Know if I Procrastinate Excessively?

- I often put off starting a task I find difficult
 - I often give up on a task as soon as I start to find it difficult.
 - I often wonder why I should be doing a task.
 - I often have difficulty getting started on a task.
 - I often try to do so many tasks at once that I cannot do any of them.
 - I often put off a task in which I have little or no interest.
 - I often try to come up with reasons to do something other than a task I have to do.
 - I often ignore a task when I am not certain about how to start it or complete it.
 - I often start a task but stop before completing it.
 - I often find myself thinking that if I ignore a task, it will go away.
 - I often cannot decide which of a number of tasks I should complete first.
 - I often find my mind wandering to things other than the task on which I am trying to work
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What Can I Do About Excessive Procrastination?

- ❑ Motivate yourself to work on a task with thoughts such as “There is no time like the present,” or “Nobody’s perfect.”
- ❑ Prioritize the tasks you have to do.
- ❑ Commit yourself to completing a task once started.
- ❑ Reward yourself whenever you complete a task.
- ❑ Work on tasks at the times you work best.
- ❑ Break large tasks into small manageable parts.
- ❑ Work on tasks as part of a study group.
- ❑ Get help from teachers and other students when you find a task difficult.
- ❑ Make a schedule of the tasks you have to do and stick to it.
- ❑ Eliminate distractions that interfere with working on tasks.
- ❑ Set reasonable standards that you can meet for a task.
- ❑ Take breaks when working on a task so that you do not wear down.
- ❑ Work on difficult and/or unpleasant tasks first.
- ❑ Work on a task you find easier after you complete a difficult task.
- ❑ Find a [good place to work](#) on tasks.

The Ten Study Habits of Successful Students

1. Try not to do too much studying at one time.

If you try to do too much studying at one time, you will tire and your studying will not be very effective. Space the work you have to do over shorter periods of time. Taking short breaks will restore your mental energy.

2. Plan specific times for studying.

Study time is any time you are doing something related to schoolwork. It can be completing assigned reading, working on a paper or project, or studying for a test. Schedule specific times throughout the week for your study time.

3. Try to study at the same times each day.

Studying at the same times each day establishes a routine that becomes a regular part of your life, just like sleeping and eating. When a scheduled study time comes up during the day, you will be mentally prepared to begin studying.

The Ten Study Habits of Successful Students (Cont.)

4. Set specific goals for their study times.

Goals will help you stay focused and monitor your progress. Simply sitting down to study has little value. You must be very clear about what you want to accomplish during your study times.

5. Start studying when planned.

You may delay starting your studying because you don't like an assignment or think it is too hard. A delay in studying is called "procrastination." If you procrastinate for any reason, you will find it difficult to get everything done when you need to. You may rush to make up the time you wasted getting started, resulting in careless work and errors.

6. Work on the assignment they find most difficult first.

Your most difficult assignment will require the most effort. Start with your most difficult assignment since this is when you have the most mental energy.

The Ten Study Habits of Successful Students (Cont.)

7. Review their notes before beginning an assignment.

Reviewing your notes can help you make sure you are doing an assignment correctly. Also, your notes may include information that will help you complete an assignment.

8. Tell their friends not to call them during their study times.

Two study problems can occur if your friends call you during your study times. First, your work is interrupted. It is not that easy to get back to what you were doing. Second, your friends may talk about things that will distract you from what you need to do. Here's a simple idea – turn off your cell phone during your study times.

9. Call another student when they have difficulty with an assignment.

This is a case where “two heads may be better than one.”

10. Review their schoolwork over the weekend.

Yes, weekends should be fun time. But there is also time to do some review. This will help you be ready to go on Monday morning when another school week begins.

Test Anxiety

WHAT IS TEST ANXIETY?

Too much anxiety about a test is commonly referred to as test anxiety. It is perfectly natural to feel some anxiety when preparing for and taking a test. In fact, a little anxiety can jump start your studying and keep you motivated. However, too much anxiety can interfere with your studying. You may have difficulty learning and remembering what you need to know for the test. Further, too much anxiety may block your performance during the test. You may have difficulty demonstrating what you know during the test.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE TEST ANXIETY?

- I have a hard time getting started studying for a test.
 - When studying for a test, I find many things that distract me.
 - I expect to do poorly on a test no matter how much or how hard I study.
 - When taking a test, I experience physical discomfort such as sweaty palms, an upset stomach, a headache, difficulty breathing, and tension in my muscles.
 - When taking a test, I find it difficult to understand the directions and questions.
 - When taking a test, I have difficulty organizing my thoughts.
 - When taking a test, I often “draw a blank.”
 - When taking a test, I find my mind wandering to other things.
 - I usually score lower on a test than I do on assignments and papers.
 - After a test, I remember information I couldn't recall during the test.
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WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT TEST ANXIETY?

1. Use good study techniques to gain cognitive mastery of the material that will be covered on the test. This mastery will help you to approach the test with confidence rather than have excessive anxiety. Employ the tips we provide at [Study Habits](#).
 2. Maintain a positive attitude as you study. Think about doing well, not failing. Think of the test as an opportunity to show how much you have learned.
 3. Go into the test well rested and well fed. Get enough sleep the night before the test. Eat a light and nutritious meal before the test. Stay away from junk foods.
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WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT TEST ANXIETY?

4. Stay relaxed during the test. Taking slow, deep breaths can help. Focus on positive self-statements such as "I can do this."
 5. Follow a plan for taking the test such as the DETER strategy we describe at [A Strategy for Taking Tests](#). Don't panic even if you find the test difficult. Stay with your plan!
 6. Don't worry about other students finishing the test before you do. Take the time that you need to do your best.
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WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT TEST ANXIETY?

7. Once you finish the test and hand it in, forget about it temporarily. There is nothing more you can do until the graded test is returned to you. Turn your attention and effort to new assignments and tests.
 8. When the graded test is returned to you, analyze it to see how you could have done better. Learn from your mistakes and from what you did well. Apply this knowledge when you take the next test.
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