

"Stay positive, work hard, make it happen."

June

Newsletter

STUDYING 101:

STUDY SMARTER NOT HARDER

Do you ever feel like your study habits simply aren't working anymore? Do you question what you could be doing to perform better in class and on exams?

Many students apprehend that their middle school study habits aren't very effective in high school; or just that their previous study habits aren't working like the charms they were. This is normal. Classes get bigger, exams are worth more, reading is more intense, and classes are much more rigorous. That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you; it just means you need to learn some more practical study skills.

What is the most effective way to study?

Finding the best way to study is an open-ended process. Learning how to study better helps circumvent panic and frustration the next time a big test is coming up. After all, you are more prone to do well and be less stressed before a test when you have had time to accurately review and practice the material!

Some important tips that seem not-so-important, but add up in the grand scheme of things are:-

1. BECOME ORGANIZED

Organize your surroundings and your work. Make your study area well organized and maintain it. Not only that, carry a homework planner at all times. Record homework, projects, tests and assignments as soon as they are assigned. This will make sure they aren't forgotten about.



2. PAY ATTENTION IN CLASS

We all know this one is easier said than done. It's important to concentrate and avoid distractions when the teacher is speaking. Practice active listening by concentrating on what's being said and taking notes in your own words. This will help make sure you hear (and understand) what is being taught in class.



3. STEER CLEAR OF DISTRACTIONS

Again, this one too is easier said than done, but, distractions are everywhere—from cell phones to social media to friends. Be aware of what distracts you in class and know how to steer clear of these distractions.

4. MAKE SURE NOTES ARE COMPLETE

Writing clear and complete notes in class will help you process the information you are learning. These notes will also become study notes that can be reviewed before a test. Talk to friends or the teacher if you have missed a class to ensure your notes are complete.

5. ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

Raise your hand and ask questions if you don't understand something. It's very important to have clear concepts; since in most examinations, only the application of concepts and facts are tested.

6. DESIGNATE A STUDY AREA

The best study spot is one that is quiet, well-lit, and in a low-traffic area. Make sure there is a clear workspace to study and write on. Everyone's needs are different, so it is important you find a spot that works for you.



7. MAKE A STUDY SCHEDULE/PLAN

When making a study schedule, look at your planner and think about what needs to be accomplished. Think about the types of questions that will be on the test and the topics that will be covered so you know what you should focus on. Set specific goals for each study session, like how many topics you will cover by the end of the session.

8. STUDY IN SHORT BURSTS

For every 45 minutes you study, take a short 10-15 minute break to recharge. Short study sessions are more effective and help you make the most of your study time.

9. SIMPLIFY STUDY NOTES

Make studying less overwhelming by condensing notes from class. Underline or highlight key words. Create visual aids like charts, story webs, mind maps, or outlines to organize and simplify information and help you remember better.

10. STUDY WITH A GROUP

Working with classmates encourages an interactive environment to keep you engaged. This gives you a chance to test your knowledge with others, quiz each other on the content, and help boost each other's confidence.

Dealing with exam stress and anxiety

For many students, the thought of studying for an exam brings to mind last-minute cramming and pulling all-nighters. You frantically gather together your notes and try to study intensely until you feel you have at least a grasp on the information, only to feel frustrated with your results later on. Sound familiar?

Stress and anxiety are a normal experience before an exam. So, here are a few good study habits to help you manage them better:

- Find a quiet place to study without distractions.
- Set-up your study space. Make sure it's not too cluttered and has everything you might need.

● Find out as much as you can about the exam so you can prepare.

● Ask your teacher if you are unsure of what will be tested.

● Learn to make 'mind maps' and use them to collect ideas and thoughts, use bright colors to help remember important links.

● Make a plan of what you want to work on in each study session. Break it down into small tasks and work on one task at a time.

● Take regular short breaks – use this time to have a drink, get something to eat or play with a pet.

● Ask for help - If you are having trouble with something you're studying ask a teacher, friend, sibling or parent to help.

Reasons why you may feel exam stress & what it can do to you

You would probably feel exam stress because:

- You are worried about how well you will do in the exam.
- You find it hard to understand what you're studying.
- You feel unprepared or haven't had time to study.
- You need to learn and recall a large amount of information for an exam.

The effects:

For the most part, exam stress would cause you to worry more, experience anxiety and depression, lose sleep, become forgetful, irritable, overwhelmed, exhausted and feel out of control, which can really impact on your ability to prepare for your exams, as well as negatively affect your levels of performance and sense of well-being.

Exam Anxiety

Exam anxiety is the experience of feeling an intense moment of fear or panic before and/or during an exam or assessment.

There are two types of anxiety:

Low anxiety: students who experience low anxiety may feel a little nervous about an upcoming exam but are still able to focus their attention on their studies or the questions asked during the assessment.

High anxiety: students who experience high anxiety show an immediate anxiety reaction when exposed to the feared test situation. They attempt to avoid the situation by not showing up to the exam.



Impact of high anxiety on performance:

Research shows that people who experience high levels of anxiety in exams can also see their performance decline in evaluation situations. Assessment situations also evoke worry responses that interfere with effective performance on cognitive and intellectual tasks.

How to overcome Exam Anxiety:

Here are some strategies that may help reduce your exam anxiety:

- Learn how to study efficiently
- Talk to your teacher
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Don't forget to eat and drink
- Get some exercise
- Get plenty of sleep



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