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# **8 Tips for Studying Effectively At University**

Every student has things going on in their life outside of their degree. The question is, how do you make sure you study effectively with all of this going on? The solution isn’t cramming in knowledge at 3am the night before your exam, no matter how tempting it becomes. You don’t need to study longer, you need to study smarter. Here’s eight tips on how to develop effective and productive study habits.

**The way you approach studying matters**

You did this course because you like it, right? That’s what you need to keep remembering! Too many students think of studying as tiresome and boring, but at the end of the day, you knew what you were getting into. Enjoy it! Being in the right mind-set is important to helping you take in more information when you’re studying. So if you’re trying to force yourself to get in the mood, it’s probably not going to be an effective study session. Keeping distractions at bay is really helpful too – if you’re Netflix notifications tell you there’s a new series to binge watch, or a friend is chatting to you about going out tonight, you’ll be lost to the void of procrastination. Try and block it out and come back to it when you aren’t working.

**Find a study area that works for you**

Some people like background noise, some people like dead silence. Sometimes you need a desk and a place to organise papers, but other days lying in bed with your laptop is much better. But one of the biggest mistakes made when looking for study space is somewhere where you have a lot of distractions!

**Bring everything you need to your study location (and leave the things you don’t!)**

Study snacks, text books, pens, check! Make sure you have all the things you’ll need with you, and think objectively about it – do you need to take your laptop at this stage, or will paper do? Can you take your phone but turn it off? Make sure you aren’t taking anything distracting along with you to make sure you can really focus on getting things done.

**Learn how to take notes that make a difference**

Note taking is super important, but sometimes it can feel like you’ve highlighted an entire page and written everything word for word. When done right, it’s in a format that’s easy to understand and is exactly what you need – as well as being able to understand what you meant when you come back to it later! Trying different study techniques can be really helpful for this, such as visual diagrams and mind maps, or writing out easy to understand notes and making them into a podcast. Most importantly, don’t lose them! Notes are helpful, but only if you review them. Having effective notes will reduce your study time, increase retention of information, and always be handy to look back at for a project in the future.

**Devise a study schedule you can stick to**

When it comes to studying (and so many other things), a good rule to stick to is go hard or go home. Studying isn’t just for when you’re exam is right around the corner, if it was we’d all pass things with ease! If you schedule study time the way you schedule a lecture, it might become less of a problem in the long run. The 30-60 minutes a day (or whatever schedule you create) in your belt will make you feel more prepared than the ten days and twenty cans of energy drink. The frequency isn’t as important as actually studying on a regular basis. Even if you spend a couple of hours a week reading through your lecture notes it’s better than waiting until the first exam and doing an all nigher in the library.

**Take breaks (and rewards!)**

It’s human nature to avoid studying if you consider it a chore. However, if you reward yourself to reinforce what you’re doing, it might work a lot better. Rewards can start by reducing study time into manageable components. Studying for 4 hours at a time with no breaks isn’t realistic (unless you’re superhuman). Studying for 1 hour, and then taking a 5 minute break and grabbing a snack is usually more sustainable and enjoyable. Divide study time into segments that make sense and work for you. If you have to digest a whole textbook chapter, find sections in the chapter and commit to reading and taking notes on one section at a time. Maybe you only do one section in a sitting, maybe you do two. Find the limits that seem to work for you.

**Keep healthy and balanced**

Balancing studying and working can be near impossible at university, but the more balance you have the easier being successful will come. When you’re out of balance, things that you aren’t doing much become harder to go back to and complete. It is important to dedicate quality time to study, but is equally as important to have friends, keep in touch with your family, and find interests outside of university that you can enjoy.

**Engage actively**

Listening hard and taking notes is always a good start, but it’s so important to engage with the course material that you’re being asked to look at in your seminar. It can be so easy to sit through a class listening, but when you ask questions, offer opinions, and interact with your classmates, that’s when you’re starting to engage in your seminar or lecture. Other ways of actively engaging can be going to the library, meeting with lecturers in office hours, taking the time to locate and read journals and attend optional talks or conferences on your subject area.

*Compiled with assistance from Liverpool Hope University.*