

Study Tips

So, you think that you are well organised, totally in control and believe you will get A's in every subject – yeah right! Now for a reality check and a few tips on getting the most out of your study time.

Planning

Studying at home requires more commitment and motivation than in class although you have the flexibility to organise your study routine around your interests. Your life is probably already busy with family commitments, work, sport, friends etc. and fitting in study can become a big problem, especially when major assignments are due and at exam time. Planning and organising are the keys to successful studying.

Making Time

At some time in the semester you will need to make yourself a study timetable! Draw up a weekly grid with hour time slots from 4.00pm until your normal bed time (say 11.00pm) Monday to Friday and hour long blocks all over the weekend. If you are a morning person, do the same from your waking time until breakfast. then block out all the commitments you must keep – work, training, meals, meetings, music lessons, those family things etc. Now give yourself a free night, maybe Friday or Saturday, for time with friends and relaxing. Now look seriously at the vacant time slots and pencil in those suitable for studying. See you do have time! Remember that you will need at least one hour at a time to really focus on your work. Try your new schedule for a week and make any adjustments, but also be flexible – your plan should be realistic enough to be a workable timetable over the semester.

And Where?

Ideally, you should organise a quiet, warm, comfortable area with plenty of work space and good lighting. Sharing the dining room table with other family activities doesn't have a lot going for it when it comes to concentrating and organising your thoughts. Some people prefer to spread out on their bed or on the floor, but you need to consider your posture and comfort over longer sessions. Also it is often a good motivator to be able to leave the study scene set up and return later to open books. Oh, and turn off the mobile phone and the television – you can always record that favourite program and watch it on the weekend.

Effective Studying

Your success will depend on your style of learning, which will involve not only making time to study, but how effectively you utilise each session. Often, finding a starting point is the hardest thing. Here are some tips that might work for you.

Set yourself goals. This can help overcome boredom and panic.

Study topics in block. Allocate sessions to particular assignments or problems.

Highlight key points. This helps you focus on the topic.

Semester planners are for setting deadlines and important dates, like tests. Refer to them often.

The best time to start an assignment is the day it is given out.

Studying

Reward yourself when you have completed a topic or major work.

If you are having difficulty with an assignment or topic, ask somebody else if they understand.

Some assignments can be fun to do with a friend or in a small group.

Looking After Yourself

You've heard it all before, but effective studying really does require the body to be in good order. Peak stress times such as exams and late night efforts can run down your energy levels and immunity to illness. The following will help:

Eat healthy foods.

Drink plenty of water.

Take regular exercise – it stimulates the brain and body.

Get enough sleep.

Take time to relax.

Go easy on cigarettes and alcohol.

Avoid arguments.

Learn to manage stress.

Accept support from family and friends.

Maintain a balance between work and play.

Taken from *Canberra College's* newsletter. Written by *Ben Bassett*.