

Developing Efficient Study Habits and a Productive Study Routine:

- Use a regular study area. Designate an area as one in which you study and try to do most or all of your studying in that area. When your mind recognizes this area as one in which you study, you'll be able to focus your attention more quickly and more effectively.
- Study where you'll be alert. Try sitting in a straight back chair at a table or desk. Being too comfortable when studying can take away from your focus and energy level. For instance, studying in bed tends not to work well because our minds are trained to recognize our beds as places where we sleep. Couches and comfortable chairs can cause the same problem. Be aware of your posture and body position, this helps you stay alert.
- Use a library or study lounge. Libraries are ideal places to study effectively because the lights are bright enough, the noise level is low enough, and resources are made available. These things combine to help you stay focused. Experiment with other locations on campus if the library isn't right for you. Look for somewhere with an appropriate work space, good lighting, and few distractions.
- Actively remove distractions. If you don't need your computer to finish your reading assignment, then turn it off while you read. Say 'no' to friends who invite you out when you have a test the next day. Make it a choice to study, and do not deviate from that choice and that plan until you have completed the task.
- Study in bite-sized chunks. Set reasonable goals while you're studying. Set a time-limit or a page number to reach. Then give yourself a 5-10 minute break. Have a cup of coffee, chat with a neighbor then get back to work. Giving your brain a rest about every half hour makes studying more manageable by reducing stress, keeping you alert, and capitalizing on the way your memory works.
- Make the process active and make it count. Whatever your preferred method of studying turns out to be, make it active. You have to process information in order to understand, remember, and learn it. Be careful of studying just to understand material. On exams you will be required to do much more than just understand what you read. You will need to spontaneously recall information and make connections within that material, in addition to some other tasks. Try to develop processing techniques (the things you do that you call studying) which require you to do the same sorts of tasks you will have to do on your exams.