

Study Advice

Health

Another key to motivation and enjoyment, which is often overlooked, is health:

- Sleep (tired minds don't work well);
- Eat (hungry minds don't work well at all) ;
- Drink water (thirsty minds don't work at all) (it might be an idea to cut down on coffee, so as to maximise the effect whenever that inevitable late night cramming and essay writing session comes);
- Exercise (oxygen to the brain also takes your mind off the academic (hobbies work as well for the latter point));
- Relax (learn to shut out college when you are not studying: have a day off when you don't do or think about anything related to exams or internal assessments);
- Stress management, stress is a highly personal thing. Each person will have different stressors and different coping mechanisms. Being realistic! (unrealistic goals will lead to negative stress!).

Know Yourself

- Be aware of your own weaknesses and don't let them fool you;
- The best way of getting something done is just doing it! Procrastination never did any good. The start is always the most reluctant and once you are into it, it's not difficult to motivate.
- Bad concentration? Left and Right brain: left is the orderly part, but if the right brain (creative) isn't involved, it will do something else; so keep it working as well.

Structure & Organisation

- Work in sessions. 30-40 minutes, and then have a break. This is the most efficient way for your brain to absorb information and actually contain it;
- Structure your studying. Pay attention to the syllabus. Pay attention to the task at hand (studying for what paper, essay or test);
- Be efficient; don't try to cram all the detail;
- Repetition is the mother of all knowledge. But make sure repetition is done intelligently. Much more will stick if you use a more creative approach to studying.

Critical & Creative Approach

- Combine methods and stimulate the brain;
- Don't take the writer's approach for granted (of your textbook);
- Identify where they "want" you to go wrong. Where are the obvious "traps"?
- Think critically at every question, and assume you know more than you might think in a stressed situation;
- Make associations. It's a good way to awaken knowledge, and will broaden your perspective;
- Use acronyms to memorise tricky things;
- Construct or find narratives (while this might be obvious in humanities/social sciences it can work surprisingly well in sciences as well. Make a story about the little gene or the electron to learn the boring details about it);
- Make a mind-map over something you have not fully understood yet. Make it big, detailed and personal to how you like to view it. Look it over actively every night for a week and see what happens.

Ways of Studying

Find a method of studying that best suits you. Below are some suggestions.

