

Top 10 Study Tips

Here's some tips on how to study more efficiently, replete your energy, and pass tests and exams with flying colours!

Tip #1: Stay Hydrated. Did you know that ***the average human brain consists of almost 80% water!*** For this reason water has a profound effect on brain function and energy levels; even a slight dehydration can produce a small but critical shrinkage in the brain impairing concentration and thinking. To keep hydrated, ***drink 8 cups of pure, filtered water every day and remember that coffee and other caffeinated beverages do NOT count.*** Caffeine actually causes further dehydration because it is a diuretic and causes water loss from the body – if you need coffee to get you through exams, make sure you follow it up with a glass of water!



Tip #2: Visualize yourself passing. Visualization is an effective tool for creating the confidence you need to pass all of your exams. It is ***used by many elite athletes to help them create renewed mental awareness,*** a heightened sense of well-being and confidence. Although you're not training for a marathon or getting ready for a play-off game, visualization can still be used in your favour. Try closing your eyes and picturing yourself 2 weeks from now with a big smile on your face while reading all your passing grades – or try writing it on paper, for example "I'm so happy I passed all my exams this year". You can make it as simple or as specific as you like, just be sure to incorporate this effective tool into your study regime.

Tip #3: Study with rosemary essential oil. Rosemary has a reputation for ***improving memory.*** A 2012 study proved that when the smell of rosemary was pumped into cubicles where people were working, they showed improved memory; the same study showed that one of rosemary's main chemical components was found to improve speed and accuracy in cognitive performance. There are 2 ways you can make this work for you: 1. Put a few drops of rosemary essential oil into a diffuser and have it going while studying OR 2. Dab some rosemary essential oil under your nose while studying.

Tip#4: Turn off all social media while studying. This one is obvious, social media is a huge distraction so remember to turn it off! You will find you can study for much shorter periods of time with higher efficiency if you can bring yourself to do this...scary thought, I know 😊

Tip#5: Take study breaks every hour. For every 50 minutes of study, plan 10 minutes of break time. Make sure to move around to increase circulation - even if it's just a short walk to grab a glass of water or a quick stretch break – it will help rejuvenate you and get you ready for the next study session.

Tip#6: Breathe deeply. When you find yourself feeling stress and overwhelmed, close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths. Place your hand on your abdomen and inhale through your nose until your abdomen can't possibly expand any further; then exhale through your mouth until there is no air left in your lungs; repeat 3 times. This works wonders for promoting a sense of calm.

Tip #7: Chew gum. Chewing gum activates your Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), also known as your “rest & digest” system. Under stress your Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) is active which is known as your “fight or flight” system; for studying and testing purposes, you want an active PNS system because it helps you to remain calm and focused, instead of jittery and anxious. In plain English, **chew gum during exams to remain focused and improve critical thinking.**

Tip #8: Exercise. Remember to keep active during the exam period...even when you feel like you don't have time to exercise, make the time! ***Just 30 minutes of exercise daily will increase your happy hormones (like serotonin)*** and help negate the negative side effects of stress such as poor sleep quality and negative moods.

Tip #9: Remember to eat well. Proper nutrition is an important part of brain function, energy and stamina. Remember to eat 3 to 5 small meals per day with an emphasis on vegetables & fruit, protein, good fats & whole grains. Each time you eat, ask yourself if you have a protein source (ex. meat, nuts/seeds, beans), a fruit/vegetable, a healthy fat (ex. avocados, nut butters, flax seeds) and a whole grain on your plate; if not, add one to it!

Tip #10: Talk to Lakehead's Naturopathic Doctor at the Wellness Centre (it's a FREE service for all students). There are many natural vitamins and medicinal herbs that can be used to ***increase energy, promote memory retention, and ease stress and anxiety.***

Happy studies!

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