

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR STUDYING



SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS BEFORE YOU START STUDYING. CHECK OFF THE TIPS THAT YOU WANT TO TRY.

- **Break down the task into manageable segments.** This approach is known as the "Swiss Cheese" approach because you begin "poking holes" in an overwhelming task. These "holes" are called "instant tasks" and require five minutes or less of your time. Maybe the idea of a 10-page term paper is frightening, but compiling a bibliography, reading one article, or talking to your instructor about your ideas for the project will seem less formidable. The underlying assumption of the Swiss Cheese approach is that it is indeed possible to get something started in five minutes (Lakein, 1973).
- **Set priorities.** List the tasks you need to accomplish. Label the tasks on your list A, B, or C, depending on their priority for that particular day (A-high priority, B-medium priority, and C-low priority). The most effective use of your time is that spent working on your A priorities.
- **Create regular habits.** You should study at a REGULAR TIME and in a REGULAR PLACE. Do not fall into the trap of studying wherever you happen to be at the time. Remember that procrastination is a habit, and one of the best ways to undo a habit is to create another, more productive habit. Your study area should be a work place that gets you in the mood for study. For example, having a specific area of the library where you always study and never waste time is a good idea (Schmitt, 1992).



HAVE GOOD HABITS DURING A STUDY SESSION.
CHECK OFF THE TIPS THAT YOU WANT TO TRY.

- Getting started may be the most difficult part, but do it anyway.** If you are having difficulty getting started, commit yourself to working on your studies for only five minutes. At the end of five minutes, ask yourself if you would be willing to commit to another five minutes. Getting started is like rolling a large boulder. It can be difficult to begin, but once started, it is usually easy to keep going (McWhorter, 1992).
- Study the subjects first that are difficult or boring for you.** Do not do the easy or short assignments first. When you start studying, your mind is fresh and alert, and you are more able to concentrate. Leave routine and more mechanical tasks for last (McWhorter, 1992).
- Concentrate while studying.** This varies from individual to individual, but fatigue is a reality for everyone. When you begin to tire, your ability to concentrate decreases quickly. In general, you should not continue studying for more than **TWO HOURS ON ANY ONE COURSE**. Take a break and go to a different course.
- Monitor your time.** Are you being productive right now? Or have you been daydreaming for the last 10 minutes? Be conscious of your use and abuse of time.
- Work as quickly and efficiently as possible.** Parkinson's Law states that work will expand to fill the time allowed for its completion. Working slower or daydreaming just because you still have plenty of time allotted for a particular task is not desirable. When you finish a task before the time has expired, reward yourself by doing something you enjoy or getting a head start on another assignment (Lakein, 1973).
- Ask yourself, "Is there one more thing that I can do?"** If you added just one small task to each study session, you would be amazed at your increase in productivity.

Sources: Lakein, A. (1973). *How to get control of your time and your life*. New York: David McKay; McWhorter, K.T. (1992). *College reading and study skills*. New York: Harper Collins; Schmitt, D.E. (1992). *The winning edge*. New York: Harper Collins.

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