

Effective Studying starts with  
the right Attitude,  
the right Desire,  
and the right Discipline

There have been many studies conducted to determine an effective approach to studying – the result and truth is that there is no single correct method.

Everyone Individual has different abilities and the best way to study is an ongoing process. You should constantly review your approach to determine the most effective way that suits your personality and circumstances.

## 1. Concentration

The first basic of effective studying starts with concentration. You should not just listen but concentrate on what is said in the classroom, or a video, to such an extent that you could almost anticipate what will follow.

## 2. Taking Notes

You should make it a habit to take extensive notes in the classroom.

It even becomes more important with the advent of E-Learning where Text Books are being discontinued.

Make clear handwritten notes of Key Concepts during each study session.

The Notes can also serve as Review Notes before a Test and creating Flashcards of Important Key Concepts

## 3. Ask Questions

Do not be afraid to ask clarification questions in the classroom environment -chances are good someone else also needs the same clarification.

## 4. Cell Phones

Cell Phones are one of the biggest culprits and should be turned off or set on silent. It is even better for it not to be close to you to avoid distraction.

We fully support the movement that Cell Phones be banned in classrooms.

**Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude  
from achieving his goal,  
nothing on earth can help the man  
with the wrong mental attitude.  
- Thomas Jefferson**

## 5. Talkative Friends

Some Friends can be a distraction.

Rather move to a different location if you have such a friend.



## 6. Dedicated Study Space

It is best to secure a dedicated spot at home to study.

Studying in the same place condition your brain to concentrate better.

Choose a spot with plenty of natural lighting and the least distractions. You should also have an upright chair and an uncluttered desk or table.

A Cluttered Desk represents a Cluttered Mind.



**Self-discipline is the ability  
to make yourself do what you should do,  
when you should do it,  
whether you feel like it or not.  
– Elbert Hubbard**

## 7. Music

Some students tend to study better with background music.

Do not listen to music on the Radio – the Presenters and Advertisements will be a distraction.

Avoid any Music with Lyrics. Yes, this will exclude your current Hit Parade favorites. Make a Playlist of Instrumental Music and remember that you are studying, not at a Rave, so keep the volume at a moderate level.

You can go nuts with any music and the volume when taking a break.

## 8. Television

Never study with the Television on or close to the Television.

## 9. Flashcards

Notes taken in the classroom should be reviewed on the same day.

Review the notes and then create Flashcards

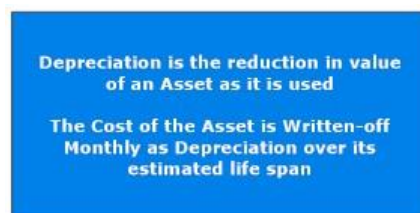
A Flashcard is a Card on which you record important Formulas, Concepts, Questions, etc. to assist you with Quick Reviews.

The Question is written on one side and the Answer is on the reverse side of the card.

Question on the Front



Answer on the Back



Some students find Flashcards boring – but **Flashcards are the most powerful Repetition Study Method** to improve memory performance.

## Manual Flashcards

Approach a Printer and ask them to cut you different Colour Cards (a different Colour for each Subject)

Be nice to them and they might only charge you a nominal fee

Popular Size	105 mm x 74 mm:
Board Thickness	0.50 mm

One Sheet of A4 will give you 8 Cards

thus, 20 Sheets = 160 Cards per Colour which should be adequate for a Subject.

Some Stationers stock Flashcards.

## E-Flashcards

There are many Flashcard applications available that will operate from your Smartphone or Laptop. Just Google “Flashcards” – some are free but with limited functionality.

# 10. Advanced Reading

Your Planning should include reading in advance the Subject Content to be covered in the next classroom session.

This habit will enable you to

- actively participate in the topic
- to ask relevant questions to clarify your comprehension

# 11. Research Tools

There are 2 powerful Research Tools available to you to complement your studies and obtain a higher comprehension level.

- **Google**  
You can “Google” almost any Subject and will be bombarded with articles covering your research
- **Wikipedia**  
Wikipedia is an excellent resource for obtaining expanded definitions and explanations of concepts.
- **ChatGPT (AI - Artificial Intelligence)**  
This is a powerful Research Tool. You need to ensure you understand the answer and then use your own words to answer any question on the subject.

Learning never exhausts the mind  
- Leonardo da Vinci

## 12. Study Groups

Study Groups provide numerous advantages.

- Attending regular Study Group Meetings helps students who have a habit of Procrastination.  
The desire to procrastinate is ever-present and much stronger when we are alone.

Study Groups provide a level of Responsibility and Motivation to overcome the Procrastination Habit.

- The different approaches and perspectives of the members of the Study Group stimulate creative thinking and comprehension of a subject.
- Learning together and obtaining a solid knowledge of the subject also motivates you to actively participate in classroom discussions.
- Members of a Study Group tend to do better with Assignments, Tests, and Examinations.



### How to form a Study Group

The following are the Guidelines to form an Effective Study Group.

- The Group should have a minimum of 3 and no more than 5 members.
- Your Group should only consist of students with a real need and desire to increase their knowledge of a subject and who will commit their time and participation in discussions
- Meetings must be held Weekly.
- The ideal duration of meetings is between 1.5 to 2.5 hours.  
Study Sessions of less than an hour are likely to be rushed.  
Productivity and Focus also tend to drop if study sessions are too long.
- Appoint a Group Leader who must determine and coordinate meeting times, meeting locations, and study subjects.

- The Meetings should generally deal with Reviews, Discussion of Difficult Issues, and address any other problems group members face.

## 13. Avoid Cramming

What is Cramming?

Cramming is when you put off studying until the last possible moment, generally, hours of memorizing are done the night before a Test or Examination.

Schedule time to study for a subject, every day for a few days, before a Test – Your marks could increase by anything from 5 to 15% and you will have longer retention of the Subject content.

## 14. Start with the Most Difficult Subject

Most of us tend to first deal with the easy, and leave the difficult for later - and then the difficult ones get the least time, or even worse no time.

Tackle the most difficult subject, task, or assignment first.

You will be able to congratulate yourself and be motivated by having completed a difficult assignment or obtained better comprehension of a subject.

## 15. Get enough Sleep

Scientific research makes it clear that adequate sleep is essential at any age. How many hours should you sleep? - a minimum of 8 hours would be a good indicator for the average person.

Also, make sure that you get adequate sleep the night before an Examination.

The number of hours is important but it is also a healthy practice to get to bed at the same time every night.

**People do not decide their futures,  
they decide their habits  
and their habits decide their futures.  
- F M Alexander**

## 16. Planning & Scheduling

All the Study Suggestions will be of no avail unless you Plan and Schedule all your activities.

You can use a Diary, Excel, or an Online Application.

Planning is mandatory,  
not optional,  
whichever approach you choose to use.

## 17. Taking Breaks

Research indicates that most people are only able to concentrate effectively for short chunks of time.

You should therefore avoid studying for any period exceeding 50 minutes without taking a break. Anything beyond 50 minutes without a break could be a total waste of your time.

We recommend that you first use the 25/5 method  
Study for 25 Minutes  
and take a 5-minute break.

before you move to the 50/10 method.

Get your mind on anything else during the break –  
Walk around, speak to someone, drink something, and reply to any messages on your Cell Phone.

Avoid taking too long breaks.

The 1<sup>st</sup> 5 minutes of the Next Study Session should be used for a Quick Review of what you did in the previous session.

- **Give me six hours to chop down a tree  
and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.  
Abraham Lincoln**



## 18. The Pareto Principle

An Italian, Vilfredo Pareto, introduced the 80/20 Principle.

The basics of the Pareto Principle state that 80% of Results come from 20% effort.

e.g. 80% of the Income in a Business could come from only 20% of the Customers.

The 80 / 20 is not a definite guideline.

It could be e.g.

10% Effort to obtain	90% Results
30% Effort	70% Results

Now, how does this apply to your Studies?

You need to analyse the Content of each Subject to determine the Time (effort) you need to spend to obtain the highest Marks (results).

## 19. Habit Changes

Developing Effective Study Skills requires a great deal of patience.

- An Informal Study in the 1950s by Dr. Maltz found that it takes a minimum of 21 Days to adapt to new changes.

People forgot that Dr. Maltz said a minimum of 21 Days and started to believe that a new habit is formed in 21 Days.

- Phillippa Lally (a Health Psychology Researcher) however did in-depth research and found that it takes 66 Days for a Habit to become automatic.

You will reap the benefits of higher Pass Rates in all your Subjects and also better adjust to the time demands when attending College or University.

## 20. Procrastination

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task that needs to be accomplished by a certain deadline.

Intentional delay is a serious Bad Habit and will stay with you all your life unless you change it now.

**Persistence is what makes  
the impossible possible,  
the possible likely,  
and the likely definite.  
- Robert Half**

Studying is a lifetime process.

It does not stop after having completed High School or having obtained your Degree.

**Good Luck with your Studies**

**Study Smarter – not Harder**

**Anyone who stops learning is old,  
whether at 20 or 80.  
Anyone who keeps learning stays young.  
- Henry Ford**