

THE STUDYING PROCESS

Studying is a very important skill that takes practice and attention to what works best for you. Below is a collection of general tips for getting the best out of a study session and ideas on effective ways to study. These ideas can be applied to any type of homework or project that requires some extended concentration and motivation.

BEFORE STUDYING

- **Go to class**
Take organized notes
- **Listen to the professor**
- **Ask questions**

It's much easier to study information you've already heard/written down.

SETTING UP

- **Find a quiet space** (no distractions)
- **Be in the best physical/mental/emotional state possible** (eat, drink, and relax before starting)
- **Have supplies available** (calculator, textbook, computer charger, etc.)
- **Switch your phone to silent/put it away** (if possible)

The goal here and throughout the study session is to have the fewest possible distractions in order to support your concentration. Just because studying is possible with distractions present doesn't mean it's the best way.

READY TO STUDY

Collect all the relevant notes and handouts. This might include:

- Practice Exams
- Lecture slides
- Written Notes
- In-class activities
- Textbook chapters

Make flashcards with vocabulary and keywords/ideas.

- Keyword on one side, definition on the other.
- Look at one side (vocab) and say the definition on the opposite side out loud.

- Continue until you don't need to look at the other side.

Identify the most confusing/important concepts from the unit(s)

- Take some time to understand the materials.
- Look up more information than necessary.
- Draw out diagrams.
- Most effective: *Be able to explain the concepts in depth to someone else without looking at notes.*

3. Find a practice test on the unit(s) and take as many as possible.

- They might be provided by the professor (if not, ask if they know of any resources)
- If not, create your own.
- Beware of what you find on Google—some “study aids” are not relevant or violate academic integrity standards. Always ask your professor first.

EXTRA TIPS

- Create a list of realistic goals to be accomplished that day.
- Plan long term: What will you need to accomplish today, tomorrow, and this week to be ready for your exam in three weeks?
- Give yourself a reward (snacks, social media break, etc.) after accomplishing a goal.
- Begin studying well before the exam, a.k.a. right after the lecture.
- Every person has a different length of time that they can concentrate, taking breaks is ok!
- Set a timer for studying time, and a timer for break time (Pomodoro technique: 25 minutes concentration/5-minute break).
- Don't leave the most difficult/confusing topics for last.
- In order to remember information, you need to keep going back to it multiple times.
- Group study sessions help some, but not others. Experiment and find the type of studying/exercises that work for you!! Check out the Avery Point Academic Center's group review sessions in biology, chemistry, and math.
- There are many more strategies online that are specific to memorization, games, and group study sessions.

CONCENTRATION AND MOTIVATION

Even if there are multiple resources available, a lack of concentration or motivation will make studying difficult. Eliminating distractions encourages concentration, while preparing properly (going to class/taking notes) helps to keep you motivated. If these measures have been taken, and it's still not working:

- Find an accountability buddy/study buddy who can keep you on track. Try an “accountability session” with the Academic Center: A tutor will check in with you at the beginning of the session to help you set your study goals for the hour, then check in again after the hour's up to see if you accomplished your goal and help you set the next one.
- Work directly with a tutor to talk through the concepts and improve your study skills (make your appointment at uconn.mywconline.net).
- Take a break, find a stress relief activity, and return to studying later with a clear head.
- Take into consideration the reasons why your concentration/motivation are lacking.

If you are struggling with abnormally low levels of concentration/motivation for an extended period of time, do not be afraid to ask for help or advice from a teacher, mentor, or health professional.

At Avery Point, contact Jessica Musgrove at the Mental Health Resource Center:
Jessica.musgrove@uconn.edu