

Study Tips & Strategies

When to Study

1. Study difficult (or boring) subjects first.

Most of us tend to do what we like first, yet the courses we find most difficult require the most creative energy. Save the subjects you enjoy for later.

2. Avoid scheduling marathon study session sessions.

When possible, study in shorter sessions. Three three-hour sessions are far more productive for most students than one nine-hour session. When you do study in long sessions, take a planned break every hour. Work on several subjects and avoid studying similar subjects back to back.

3. Be aware of your best time of day

Many students learn best in daylight hours. Observe yourself and, if this is true of you, schedule study time for your most difficult subjects when the sun is up. The key point is to determine your best learning time. If early morning doesn't work for you, find out what time is better.

How to Study

1. Identify how you learn best by taking the VARK Learning style quiz

Everyone learns most effectively in a unique way. For some it's by what they see, others by what they hear, and for some it's by what they experience and do. We are capable of learning in all of the different ways, but for most people one particular way of learning influences us the most.

Researchers have shown that students perform better on tests and in exams if they use study techniques tailored to their own personal style of learning. The quiz below is based on the **VARK model** of learning – one of the most common and widely used in the world. Which just so happens to be created by Kiwi Neil Flemming! VARK stands for Visual, Auditory, Read & Write, and Kinesthetic.

Take the VARK learning quiz here <http://www.thestudygurus.com/learning-styles/>

2. Aim to be an active learner, not a passive one

Generally, most people learn best by manipulating the information discussed in class, and finding creative ways to retain information. Consider ways of dealing with the information other than those used in class. The more ways you can manipulate and experience the material you are trying to learn, the more secure your understanding and memory will be. Some suggestions:

1. Make charts, diagrams, and graphs
2. Make lists
3. If the subject matter includes structures, practice drawing those structures

3. Study from concept to detail

When you study a large body of information, you should study from concept to detail, not the other way around. It will, in fact be much easier to learn the details if you take the time to learn the concept and theory first. The least efficient approach to studying is to attempt to memorize your notes from beginning to end. It's not the words which are important—it's the ideas.