Tips for Studying at College

Studying at college is really no different from studying during high school, with the exception that it is likely your mom or dad will not be asking if you have done your homework on a daily basis. Still, there are things that you can do while away at college or university to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of your study time.

Stay Organized
Nothing can eat into your study time more than being disorganized. Searching for lost notes, missing papers and misplaced books can be a huge waste of valuable learning time. To keep better organized:

- Have one notebook dedicated to each class you are taking. That way you will not be flipping through five classes of information looking for one page of notes from two months ago.
- Keep track of important dates and times (class schedules, mid-terms, due dates, etc.) in a calendar or day planner.
- Use a color coding system if you find it helpful (list all daily assignments in blue, all term papers in red, etc.).

Plan Ahead
Always look ahead in your calendar so that you do not forget any upcoming assignments. Nothing will send a chill up your spine faster than opening your day planner and discovering the paper you thought was due next Monday is actually due in three hours. Try recording both the day big assignments are due and specific milestones for finishing those assignments. If you have to write a report comparative literature paper, your calendar could include entries for "Finish Reading Books;" "Start Doing Research" and "Finish Rough Draft" in addition to the obvious "Turn in Paper" entry.

Know Yourself
Understand your body rhythms, your personal rituals and responsibilities outside of studying.

Are you a morning person or a night owl? Schedule your study sessions for the time of day when you are your most alert and attentive.

Do you always watch a specific television show on Wednesday night, meaning you will not be focused if you have to study at that time? If so, be sure to set aside some time Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning to make sure you get all your work done.

Do you volunteer with kids on Tuesday afternoons or play intramural volleyball on Sunday nights? You can allow time for these extracurricular activities while still setting aside enough time to do the studying you need to do.

Keep Yourself in Good Physical Shape
The mind functions best when the body is operating at its peak. To keep physically fit and mentally quick:

- Make sure you are getting enough sleep.
- Eat healthy and well-balanced meals.
- Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes at least four to five times each week.

Study with a Friend or Classmate
Many people find it beneficial to study with somebody else in their class. Study partners can break reading assignments up between themselves, share notes and answer each other's questions. They are also great safety nets to have in case you accidentally oversleep and miss a class.

A word of warning: make sure that your study partner is not taking advantage of the situation by having you do all the work. If your partner is not doing their fair share of note taking and other work then you should reconsider the partnership.
Avoid Distractions
The most important study tip to remember is to avoid being distracted when you are trying to learn. If you have a noisy roommate or the fire alarm is always going off in your dorm you will need to find a better place to study. Luckily, most colleges and universities have large libraries filled with thousands of books and hundreds of seats where students can find solitude in their pursuit of knowledge. If the library is not your style perhaps a café, coffee shop, computer lab or park on a quiet street is where you will do your best studying. Wherever the place, visit it often enough to ensure that you learn and accomplish all the academic goals you want to achieve while at college.

Additional Information
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