

Learn to Learn for Life

# Super Learning Secrets

The Most Powerful Study Methods Obtainable  
Using the Most Powerful Tool Known - Your Brain!

*Stop Wondering Why You  
Studied So Hard and Still  
Got a Bad Grade!  
Get Predictable Positive  
Results from Study Time*

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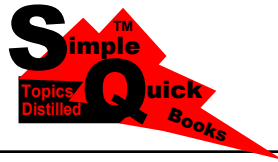
**You must be a lifelong learner or be behind.  
Learn to learn right - you will use it all your life!**

# Super Learning Secrets

The Most Powerful Study Methods Obtainable



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For 4 Hanai nieces, by age:  
Ocean, Erika, Sky, Elaina

## How to Study to Really Learn

Within the next few pages you will learn the very best ways to study. Most research is meant to find the best practices for instructors. The information here is for the student.

It is important to realize that research that shows certain methods of instruction to be effective, only shows “mostly superior”. No research so far has given 100% positive results - that would be: everyone always does better with any subject. What studies show is a “statistically significant” increase in the number of students who do well when they receive instruction via the method being studied.

What that means in practical terms for you is, if you try something and it doesn't give results you want, try another method. Or try multiple methods. And a method that works for you in one subject may not help much with another subject. After all, calculus, Spanish, creative writing and accounting are different.

You can absolutely learn faster, easier, and better. Effective learning is a skill, or set of skills, that can be learned and improved. You are about to learn the very best methods to learn whatever you need to learn. First you get the big picture of the methods and some research behind them. Then you get the methods condensed without research. Then a shorter version for practical use.

You have been in a class where the instructor was not interesting, you weren't interested in the subject and learning was difficult. You have also had classes where you were interested in what the instructor had to say and learning was easier. Sometimes the enthusiasm of an instructor can hold our interest. Sometimes our inherent interest in the subject keeps us paying attention. Sometimes it is a need to get a good grade from that class which holds our attention.

A common denominator in ability to learn a subject is the interest of the student. When you are interested you pay better attention. You are willing to do a little more. You don't avoid reading, or going to class or study. Sometimes it's even fun to study when your interest is strong enough.

You have experienced how easy learning can be when there is sufficient interest. Did you collect stamps when you were younger? (Or coins, seashells or other item) Didn't you learn about the different things that determine mint, very good, or good condition; what stamps were very valuable so you could keep your eyes open for a treasure; what images were on the stamps in a series you were interested in; the first year of some specific denomination and on and on?

Did you spend hours reading over these facts and make flash cards and take notes? Probably not. You read it once, in an "everything about stamps" kind of book and you told family and friends about it. And you just remembered it.

Did you collect some super hero comic? Did you learn the date of the first issue, all the villains the hero ever went up against, the storyline of many issues, and more? Again, did you study to learn those things? Or were you simply exposed to the information and remembered it because it had meaning for you? It was important to you.

Did you ever fall when learning to skate or ride a bicycle? You only fell once before you learned it hurts to fall and you didn't want to fall again. That bit of information had value to you so you didn't forget. And that bit of information added value to ~~any other information or skill that might help you not fall down in the future.~~

Generally speaking there are two types of interest: individual and situational. Individual is exemplified by the stamp collecting and other examples above. If you are going on a nature walk in the desert and a Park Ranger is telling you about the dangers and how to recognize them, you will for the moment have a situational interest in rattle snakes, brown recluse spiders, scorpions and Gila monsters. Once you leave the desert, your interest in those things will probably disappear.

Interest doesn't directly help learning. Interest makes you pay attention. Anything is easier to learn when it has your attention. Attention is when your conscious thoughts are focused on one subject or one aspect of your environment to the exclusion of other possible subjects and aspects.

For example, looking at and admiring the giant cartoon balloon in the parade but not noticing the police group marching behind it or the fire truck in front. Like when the instructor says, “This will be on the test.” And you immediately focus on what is being said and nothing else.

It is possible to have divided attention. Like listening to a friend giving you some good gossip while you watch a ball game. You may get the gist of both; you may recall the highlights; but you will not absorb everything about either the conversation or the game. You remember quite a lot because you know the rules of the game, maybe know the players and have watched many games before; you also know the subjects of your friends gossip and may have heard some of it before.

If you are studying subjects you already familiar with, you may be able to study with divided attention and retain a little of the information. But most of the time we are studying new material, often an entirely new subject. Anything that divides attention, greatly reduces the effectiveness of your study even for a familiar subject. For a new or difficult subject it can basically prevent learning. You can spend an hour watching television while you “study” and when you look at it tomorrow and can’t remember anything, you’ll wonder why and think “This is really hard!”

~~Pay attention. To help pay attention, get a reason to be~~ interested. If you don’t have an individual inherent interest in something and therefore find it difficult to focus your attention, try to create a situational interest.

First you can find the relevance in the subject. This is something that the instructor will emphasize ideally, but that always doesn’t happen. Quite often if relevance (other than to a test) is voiced it will be a single statement usually on the first day of class. So find the relevance yourself. Ask yourself questions. Why is this important? How will I use it?

There are many things the material may have relevance for. That test, a good grade, preparing you for the next level class, preparing you to pass a professional exam, preparing you to do the work in your eventual career. Look for the relevance in the material and remind yourself as often as needed.

What about keeping your scholarship, does that raise some interest? Keeping a good GPA. Impressing someone you are interested in. Curiosity is interest. Are there things about the subject as a whole you would like to know? List them and as the semester progresses try to find the answers.

When you study it is important that your attention be focused on the subject at hand. On the other hand when you are not studying your attention muscle needs to rest. The best friend you can have when you need to rest your mind is nature. A great deal of research backs this up for different age groups and for various situations. Nature allows your attention ability to recover, reduces stress and improves disposition and outlook.

There is good news if you don't live anywhere near the country. You don't need a forest or jungle to benefit from nature. Even photos of nature have been shown to improve stress levels. It might not be convenient to study in nature but in between study sessions, classes and whenever possible, enjoying nature can relax your mind and help you study better next session and pay better attention next class.

Have photos of nature in your room or apartment. Keep potted plants. Grow a window garden. Visit the nearest park. Get a screen saver of nature. Keep a vase of fresh flowers on your desk. ~~Wear a flower in your hair or lapel.~~ If you can't leave the library and feel brain dead, and you have a single nicely scented flower, hold it where you can smell it, close your eyes and imagine being in a beautiful flower garden with the sun warming you. Don't listen to your mp3 player unless you have a track of nature sounds.

Develop and interest and pay attention to all classes. Paying attention is a skill that will transfer to other subjects, next year's classes and beyond school. It will always help you. And when you get the chance - and make sure you get the chance - rest your mind. Nature is your best tool for refreshing your brain.

Do you respond well to reward? Like a mouse who will run on a wheel all day for a food pellet every ten minutes. Some of us do, some don't. If it is meaningful for you to get a pizza, then reward yourself with a pizza for a good test score. If you don't already know this works for you, don't bother. There are better ways.

This idea sounds crazy unless you are a person who likes to solve puzzles. If you are disinterested in a subject and can't imagine why anyone would take it if it wasn't required, channel that feeling. Challenge yourself to look for ways at each class and for each chapter how that information could be useful to someone. See how long of a list you can create over the semester.

Sometimes the way something is being presented can make the difference in whether or not you become interested and understand. If your text book for a class is particularly dull, look for another. You will still need to reference the class text but another more interesting book may ignite your interest and explain things better.

Self talk and autosuggestion can help too. Do not tell yourself that something is terribly difficult or boring. Your subconscious is always listening and is influenced. Develop simple habits like telling yourself when you wake up each morning that this is going to be a good day, that you can hardly wait to learn something new. Remind yourself again before a study session.

At night, last thing before sleep, while you are in a twilight state, tell yourself you are going to enjoy study tomorrow, that you are going to have a blast learning tomorrow and maybe mention something you intend to learn and affirm that you will learn it well. Even if these thoughts and attitudes are manufactured at first, over time they will have a positive impact.

How is it possible for things like self talk and autosuggestion to influence your performance? The RAS is the answer. That stands for reticular activating system. It is a part of your brain that brings relevant information to your attention.

Imagine walking through a crowded mall or airport or anywhere there are a lot of people talking and other noises. You don't particularly hear anything. It is all background noise.

But if mall security comes behind you in a cart and toots the horn, you hear it and move; if you are in the airport and hear your name or flight number you hear that. It's because your RAS knew that you wanted to catch that flight and that a horn usually means a vehicle warning. Those are important things so the RAS brings them to your attention.



Your mind or capacity to think is divided into two parts - conscious and unconscious. When you are actively focusing on something, or making decisions, the conscious mind may have greater power. In most day to day activity, however, the subconscious wields more power.

The subconscious is where habit resides. Most of the things you do each day are accomplished by habit. Tying your shoes, taking a shower, eating, driving, reading, watching television are all done with little or no conscious thought. That's why habits can be so powerful and difficult to break. They are actions that you took consciously some time in the past and repeated enough that they became unconscious actions.

The RAS gives instruction to the subconscious from the conscious mind. The RAS works with either positive or negative input. If you say you can't do something or that a topic is too difficult, the RAS responds by helping you not be attentive. It is programmable.

So use self talk and autosuggestion to program it with positive influence. Every day you should be telling your subconscious that you can learn, you need to learn, it's good to learn and you want to understand what you read, etc. Your subconscious will respond with automatic thoughts and actions to support you.

~~You won't like this, but friends can be a good or bad influence~~ on study and achievement also. Friends who encourage you to skip study, or cut class or often tell you how a class or grades are unimportant, aren't doing you any favors.

You have a short term memory and a long term memory. You can hold 5-9 things in short term memory for 10-20 seconds before it disappears. If it has a great significance to you it can move on into long term memory but most things need to be rehearsed or practiced to go to long term memory.

Study is often divided into two types - active and passive. In research this often refers to action instituted by the instructor. If the instructor lectures, that is passive learning for you. If you are given a project, that is active learning.

Passive learning is the notice and retention of information through the senses. You taste a pretzel and learn that it is salty. You look in a Spanish-English dictionary and learn that la mesa is the table. You hear directions from a person at the corner and find the way to your friends house.

Active learning requires more. Few of us can look at an algebra problem for the first time and know how to work it. Few of us can hear an explanation of photosynthesis once and go explain to someone else. And few of us could go to an expensive restaurant, taste the specialty of the resident chef and return home and recreate what we tasted.

We can work an algebra problem, explain photosynthesis and recreate a tasty dish but first we will need to “think”. Input through the senses is just the beginning. What we do with the input makes active learning.

Sorry to say just listening to a lecture is passive. Highlighting important points in your text is passive. For most of us in most subjects, activities like these are very inefficient methods of learning. There are many things you can do to improve your learning and perhaps even decrease the time it takes to learn something.

Highlighting is great for identifying material you may want to look up later. But it is too passive to be really effective for learning. You see it, you mark it.

You can improve highlighting by adding tactile or touch input. Make a note in the margin related to each thing you highlight. It might be a note of why this is important, a reference to another related highlight, or a question you have.

That simple difference in highlighting is powerful. It’s like the difference in answering a multiple choice question with only two answers that are nothing alike (no thinking required), compared to answering a fill in the blank question with 4 blanks. You must think more to fill in the blanks.

Using more than one type of input is important. Hearing an instructor explain photosynthesis is a beginning. Then seeing a diagram of the cycle helps more. Repetition, seeing and hearing the information again helps more.

If you actually take a sheet of paper and diagram the process yourself that will help a lot more, even if you are looking at the book when you do it. Then you can diagram it again without looking at the book. If you explain it to someone else that helps more. If a friend asks you about the process and you answer the question, that really helps. There are reasons for all this.

Everything you now know or will ever learn is a memory peg. It is a point of relationship to many other things. When you are learning something new, the more pegs available for it to latch onto, the easier it is to learn.

If you know the sound of “at” and how to spell cat, and you know the sound of the letter b, learning to spell bat is much easier than if you did not know the other information.

Someone who worked on her bicycle a lot when she was younger will probably have an easier time learning to work on a scooter. This related information that you already have is called background information.

If you do not know what the “b”, “h” and “l” stand for, you will have a difficult time working a problem in geometry. In essence everything you learn builds upon everything you already know. Some things relate directly to one another, some things are analogous or similar. Even recognizing the differences in things can sometimes aid learning.

Memory pegs and background information are probably the reason an “expert” in a subject will learn new things in that subject much faster than someone just beginning. Pegs provide context like: this comes after...; this must happen because...; that is part of...; that is just like...

Being really good at a skill is called automaticity. That’s what happens when you learn to drive and eventually do it without much conscious thought. It’s automatic. For the average person it takes about 40 exposures or practices for automaticity to occur. So when you are learning math or other skill based subject, don’t give up; don’t quit early. It takes a lot of practice to get it .

Something you probably were told somewhere along the line is, make yourself a place to study. Always study there and you will do better. Well, sorry but that seems to be wrong, too.

Research has been done and repeated that shows learning is improved when you study in different places. One study that pointed this out was like this: 2 groups studying same subject. Both groups studied twice. One group studied in the same place both times. The other group studied in two different places. The group that studied in different locations consistently scored better than the other group.

One idea about how this works is “cues”. A cue is something that reminds you of something else. You can’t remember the capital of Texas and your friend says, “It begins with A.” Immediately you remember Austin. The letter “A” was a cue. By studying in various surroundings, your subconscious is provided with more potential cues. Whether this is really why it works is really unimportant to the student. It works Use it.

There is definitely a place for cues. We call them mnemonics. These are memory aids. HOMES. That is a mnemonic that some will recognize. Name the great lakes. Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior. The letters provide cues and greatly increase ability to remember. Here is a mnemonic that puts the planets in order: "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pickles."

Mnemonics is just a form of a broader study method called chunking. You can only learn so many bits of info at a time. ~~But a bit of info doesn't need to be one item only. It can be chunked together with other related information.~~

Phone numbers are a good example of chunking. They are much easier to recall as groups than they would be as a long series of single numbers. When you have a list to remember try to divide it into chunks. Chunks can be in visual patterns (graphics), number groups, stories, organized by time or any way you “see”.

The ideas of pegs, cues and chunks can influence learning in another way. The more ways you study, the more efficient the learning because you are providing your brain with different cues and pegs and chunks and the study methods themselves are new cues you have created.. Therefore, using flash cards (taking a fill in the blank test), writing an explanatory essay, designing a mnemonic and drawing a diagram each creates a different memory experience and taken together will make recall much easier.

Repetition is important to learning. The more unfamiliar the subject the more important repetition becomes. But repetition is repetition is not the case. 4 words. Spaced repetition. Distributed practice. These refer to the same thing. Study, wait awhile, then study again. Tons of research shows that spaced repetition is much better than single long study. For example, three one hour sessions will improve learning much more than one 3 hour session.

One reason is that some of the study on the second and third session is more active no matter what you do. You will be recalling what you went over the previous session, making decisions about what needs to be looked at this time. Those require “thinking” not just presentation of information. There is an old saying that fits this pretty well: Practice makes perfect. Actually perfect practice makes perfect.

Some research even shows that spaced repetition or study results in better learning in less total time. For example, one study compared test results from two groups studying a foreign language. One group had 26 study sessions in 14 days. The other group had 13 study sessions spread over 58 days. Group two did better even though total study time was half.

Here are two important points from the research on spaced repetition. ~~Research shows greater time between study actually improves long term retention as in the research above (13 sessions in 2 months).~~ But in school you don't have a lot of room to play with this. You need to learn it this week or by the next test.

Luckily, research also shows that basically taking a long break to create two sessions out of one is better than one long session.

One of the best ways to actively engage your brain is a test. A test requires you come up with information either from scratch or at best with cues like a multiple choice test. Research has shown that the combination of a study session and test compared to two study sessions results in better retention and grades on a test a week later. When you test yourself, you practice both the recall of that subject matter and the skill of test taking. So a good tactic is study tonight and create a test. Tomorrow night take the test and review it.

Cramming is common but that doesn't mean it is good. Cramming for some subjects will get you through a test. But information input in a cram session goes away very quickly. That's bad anytime since it would be ideal if you could remember at least a little information from every class.

It is worse if you are in a class where the final is cumulative and you've had 4 tests and all that material will be on the final. And you crammed for each. That means you have likely forgotten most of the information from each of the other tests and now you need to cram for the final. Even if you manage to pass your score is likely to be less than it would have been with real study. If you had used more efficient study methods, preparation for the final would be less difficult. And you would remember more next semester when you take the next level of that subject.

Here is a personal lesson you may find helpful. In the seventh grade there was a history test that I did not study for. I didn't pay attention in class, didn't read the chapter and knew exactly nothing about the material. I decided I would cheat. The morning of the test I was up early and spent an hour or so going through the chapter. I picked out what I thought would be on the test and wrote the information in tiny letters on a sheet of paper about the size of a 3x5 card. I folded it, slipped it in my pocket and went to school. ~~I didn't cheat it turned out and I got a good grade. The~~ "cram" session making the cheat sheet was enough and taught me a good study method. After that, for many classes, I would read a chapter before it was gone over in class. I would write myself notes of what seemed important. I could do that in an hour or two. When the teacher went over the material I would add anything I hadn't noted and cross off anything that wasn't mentioned. Then the night before the test I just went over my notes. It was very effective for many classes and beats cheating or cramming.

In the 1920's the famous psychologist Kurt Lewin had a habit of having coffee with students. He noticed that the waiters could remember even complicated orders precisely until they were served. Within a few minutes after serving however, hardly anything could be recalled. One of his students, Bluma Ziegarnick, studied this phenomena which became known as the Ziegarnick effect.

The Z effect is used in advertising - “Later I’ll tell you how to get...” and in soap operas which always leave the viewer hanging for some outcome. The Z effect simply says recall is better for something that is unfinished. There are a couple of refinements that have been noted. The effect is stronger if you are interested in the topic and stronger if there is ego involvement. So if you have that inherent interest mentioned earlier, that works. If you really want to get an “A” or win the game, or prove something to someone or similar motivations, the Z effect will help.

How much study is enough? Depends. If you are familiar with the subject it should take less study time. If you know nothing it will take more study. If you have experience with similar subjects it can make study easier. But don’t try to put a number on your study. Be flexible. There will be difficult chapters and easy chapters for most subjects. Study as much as needed to know it.

Think of study as practice. If you are on the basketball team and want to be a starter, you will practice a lot and not complain. If you want to be a star tennis player or chess master and get invites to invitational matches, you will practice until you feel good about the activity and probably study more after that. And you won’t complain. You are practicing to get better at something that will help you achieve something you have decided you want. Diploma, degree, career, life. Think of all your classes like that.

No class is too difficult. You can learn anything you really want to - eventually. One thing about education though is that it is progressive. So you can learn calculus. No problem But first you need to learn math and algebra. It depends on how bad you want it, because your desire will determine the effort you put into it; a little study or a lot. Are you up for one easy method or anything it takes?

For some classes you may need to “enhance” your study schedule. A good rule of thumb is to allow 2 hours study time for every hour of class time. After the first class session you may decide you need to double that or even triple it for some classes. But for others you may be able to study less. Be flexible. Be willing to do whatever it takes. And you can do it.

This same idea can be used with flash cards. Make them. Then remake them with shorter hints and consolidate some of the ideas/questions so that less cards cover the same amount of material.

5. Review and test yourself with a timed essay. Don't worry about great writing. Set a timer for 2 or 3 minutes and write as much as you can about the topic. This is good to practice speed recall for tests and shows holes in your knowledge.

6. Teach or explain a topic. Photosynthesis. Why the Magna Carta was important. The beginning of political parties in the United States. ~~Differential diagnosis for dengue fever.~~ If possible, teach a person who knows nothing of the subject. Otherwise play both teacher and student. Explain it. Then imagine what a student might ask. What could you make more clear?

7. Preview. Before reading a chapter, read the intro and questions at the end. Review what was in the last chapter. Decide what information you might want to look for (make use of the Ziegarnick effect). This will make the important information stand out when you see it. Before a class go over your notes from the previous class and from reading the text. The new material will make more sense with a review of what led up to it.

8. Relax when you get a chance. You can study more effectively if you are not stressed. Visit nature or bring some nature home to help you relax. And during study sessions take breaks. It not only relaxes your mind but also strengthens learning by spacing your work.

9. Improve attention by eliminating distractions. Don't try to watch television and study. Something you hear will grab your attention and you will look. One kind of music has been shown to improve learning - baroque. It is often referred to as the Mozart effect but other baroque music seems to work. Almost any instrumental will beat songs with words. You will start thinking of the words and maybe sing along. That's not good for attention.



Sometimes the distraction is in your head. That can be the most difficult to eliminate. If you are worried about something or hyped up about a weekend adventure, it can sometimes help to schedule a session following your study session, specifically to work on the problem or trip planning or whatever.

10. A good method of preview, review or study is list and rank. List all the main ideas of the subject matter covered. Now order them according to importance. The importance can be your subjective opinion. The idea is to explain why they are ordered like they are. This requires you compare and contrast. That is critical thinking, that is active, and that improves learning.

11. If you don't understand something in class, ask your teacher to explain. The further you go into a semester without understanding things, the more difficult it all will become. Don't get behind.

12. Flash cards may seem old fashioned but they work. Make them manually. The thinking, deciding what to put on them, deciding on the wording and then the physical act of writing all require active involvement. And flash cards don't take much room. Depending on the size of your pocket, you can carry 100 or more cards with you to look over any time. Because of size and portability, flash cards allow you to review any and all your subjects throughout the day, a few minutes at a time.

Use some questions on the cards more than once by reversing the direction of the question as described above. For some classes flash cards make an excellent method to go over material from early in the semester to prepare for a final. And flash card need not be just for single or simple answers. For chemistry for example you might have DEFINE A SALT AND EXPLAIN WHAT MAKES A SALT ACID OR BASE

13. An obviously effective method to study math and applied math subjects is to practice problems. Practice every problem in your text. Get one or more other sources: from the library, used book store, or on line. If the library book is in reference, make photocopies of problem and answer pages.

When you can work a type of problem easily, do more. It will solidify the information and make that type of problem even more easy. Then review and practice that type of problem tomorrow and then in a couple of days and again in a week.

Refine this process. You need not just to learn how to work the problems but how to do it quickly and understand what you are doing. A good process for getting to that stage is this: Identify a relatively simple or uncomplicated problem of any specific type that you can work correctly. Work it again and talk yourself through what you are doing and why. Remember automaticity.

Then work it again until it is simple and fast. Then work another at the same level. And work it again. In the beginning you might even go so far as name each symbol and it's significance.

Going through this process with a problem you understand will help you memorize the procedure. When you feel really comfortable with the first level of problem, you move on to a more difficult level or type of problem and do the same thing. This uses the power of spaced repetition and solidly plants the vocabulary in your mind as well as increasing your confidence.

Compare this to learning to playing poker if you know nothing about it. The first few hands you may be asking things like, "How many cards do we get?", "What's higher than 4 of a kind?", "What's a wild card". After a few hands the questions will stop because you will remember - you will know how to play poker. And if you want to be a pro you keep playing.

One thing about math, applied math and science subjects is how vocabulary can make it difficult. These subjects each has it's own jargon. Jargon is specialized vocabulary and if you don't understand the jargon you hear in a lecture, it can slow down your thinking.

Think about cooking. Even if you really aren't a cook, you probably have at least seen stages of baking a cake. You know what flour, sugar, milk, an oven and measuring cup are. So if someone talks you through a recipe and how to bake a cake you are not likely to get lost.

In a class where you are getting a lot of jargon you are not familiar with, your brain slows down a bit every time you hear a word you don't understand. Even if you "sort of" understand it, you are slowed down. Try to get comfortable, not just familiar, with jargon before it gets presented in these classes. That is one reason preparing before a class is important. Everything will make a lot more sense if you readily understand what is being said..

14. Get physical, get real, get tangible. Becoming an engineer or engineering tech in any field requires learning skills that pertain to things. Those skills always rely on working a lot of problems. It can be difficult to visualize or relate those problems to the things to which they apply. That can complicate learning. If you aren't doing hands on work to aid comprehension, create some work of your own. Consider it a hobby. Buy hobby kits from science supply houses that guide you through building things or performing experiments that represent the concepts you are learning. Hobby kits are made for hobbyists. They will explain things in very simple terms and you can relate that to the advanced information you get in class. Or you might need to raise an animal, grow a plant, visit a museum, etc.

15. Here is a great technique for any subject where there is something you don't quite grasp. Go to the young adult or children's section of the library and check out books on the subject that are written for elementary age. You will get basic vocabulary plus a broad view of the subject. Together they provide a solid platform to begin adding more complicated information.

16. A couple of guidelines can help you when you take a test.

If you have a question you can't answer easily, keep going. Go through the entire test, basically answering things you are sure of or mostly sure. Then go back and take more time on the difficult questions. If you spend so much time on a question that you never get to the last 6 questions because time runs out, you have penalized yourself. You may have known the answer to all those last 6 question but they will be counted wrong because you didn't get to them.

Review before an exam but it shouldn't be a cram session. If you have studied all along it doesn't need to be. Ideally it will consist of a single page or 3 x 5 card that is essentially a list of cues which you can look at and then mentally fill in the rest of the sentence or page as needed.

Always check your answers if you have time. Don't turn in your test just because you finished. Look it over. Make sure you didn't miss anything, check math and spelling if it counts.

17. Be flexible in your study but incorporate repetition and spacing as part of any method. Both increase retention and learning, and spacing as short as a few minutes can improve retention. A good way to study is to study 30-40 minutes on one subject. Take a break. Work on another subject. Take a break. Work on another subject. Take a break. Return to the first subject.

If you are studying something that you scheduled an hour to do and at one hour you haven't finished but feel you can in a few more minutes, go ahead. Keep that info chunked together to help retention.

On the other hand, if you are having a difficult time on something and 45 minutes into a scheduled hour you feel brain dead, take a break and go on to something else. Then come back to the problem subject. If your brain is feeling like a rock and you just don't "get it" let your brain rest from that for awhile.

On the third hand, what if you have had trouble understanding something (often a problem oriented subject like math or physics) and just as scheduled time runs out, you suddenly get a problem right? You think you understand at last. Now is not the time to stop. Spend a little extra time to review what you just did, put it into words, write it down, work the problem again. Take a few extra minutes and solidify that knew skill. Then stop or break and move on to another subject.

18. Remember to vary where you study. You can have a favorite place but have a couple of alternative locations, too.

19. Remember, just reading is passive and helps you learn little. Read your text book once, no more. As you read, make notes of what is important. Put the notes in your own words. Study your notes. The textbook at that point is a reference to find something that didn't make it into your notes. You can highlight just to make things easier to find if needed and in your notes you can include the page number where that bit of information was found.

20. Condense. This has been mentioned within other methods. As an overall strategy it should also be considered. This is almost the natural progression of knowledge. Eventually you know certain things because they are a regular part of life and are constantly reviewed via practice. Continue to condense information to the point where simple cues are all you need.

When we first learn to drive we are all nervous and feel there is so much to learn. Months later we still do some thinking about what we are doing (hopefully) but less than in the beginning. Years later driving is like eating. Very little or no conscious thought is required. The comparison is even more important if you began driving with a standard transmission then went to automatic. Years later you can drive a car with standard and the most help you need remembering are the cues on the gear knob - the numbers showing the gears.

Condense study materials as much as you can. Become able to recall - to use - information from cues that are simple as possible. Your memory can do it, you just need to guide it and practice.

If you have ever been told you have a learning style, forget it. The notion of learning styles has been pretty well debunked, retired. If you feel you do better with a particular type of study (auditory vs visual learner) it is because that was an early method you adopted and continued to use. So you feel comfortable with it.

The important part of that. You can learn using any style. The difference is in the material. Most can learn auto mechanics better with demonstration. Math requires a lot of practice. Anatomy study can benefit from lots of visuals. Use everything. Find what works best for you on a particular subject.

## Even Shorter Version

1. Reduce or eliminate distractions. Pay attention. This is your foundation.
2. Spaced repetition. Study, wait, study. The “wait” can be from a few minutes to a few days or longer.
3. Schedule study sessions and don’t miss them!
4. Make and take tests from your notes and reading.
5. Explain or teach someone, especially the more difficult topics.
6. Review, preview. Before a class review the notes from last class. If jargon is needed, know it before you go into class.
7. Relax. Enjoy nature. Get re-charged for study.
8. Use multiple methods for multiple pegs and cues.
9. When the subject matter lends itself, compare and contrast to list and rank.
10. Don't get behind. Ask your instructor, get a tutor, find a better book or whatever it takes.
11. Use flash cards. Condense them. (Chunking)
12. Work each math/science/engineering problem several times to help plant the process/procedure firmly in your brain. Talk yourself through it, explaining what you’re doing. Automaticity.
13. If appropriate for the subject, get physical: start a hobby, build a model, grow a sample, visit a museum. Relate the learning to something tangible.
14. Sometimes it helps to get a foundation for a subject by using materials meant for much younger students. Visit the children' section of the library. (Get background data)

NOTES. Title for page, What's covered on page. If you have ever wasted time flipping through notes looking for something you know why this is important.

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If notes are from text, page numbers here will help you find material if needed later.

## *Main Notes Section*

Or/and use this section for new vocabulary

If you want to combine lecture and text notes, whichever you do first, use half a page at most. Then begin another page. That way you can keep ideas together better.

Or write notes on the notes - explain it in your own words

OR

Notes from a different source than main notes

If your subject matter is just the beginning and you will be taking advanced classes next semester or next year, put page numbers on your notes. Three hole punch them and keep them in a notebook. Spend a few hours during the semester or summer break to look over your notes, and again a day or two before your first session of the advanced class. Those old notes will often be useful in the advanced class.

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This area can be used like the left margin.

**LEARN**

**To Remember Better**

**What You Are Doing That Doesn't Work**

**The Best Way to Study Math and**

**Problem Oriented Subjects**

**The Most Effective Study Methods**

**The Best Way to Rest Your Study Muscle**

**Better Note Taking**

**Scheduling**

**And More!**

**Plus Get Free Access to**

**\* Resources used to prepare this Topic**

**\* The Perfect Student Schedule Form**

