

# LEARNING STRATEGIES PACKAGE

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- GOAL Setting
- TO DO Lists
- Fun and Rewards

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- Important considerations

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# TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management refers to the way we spend and organize our time. Whether we are the organizational type, or the fly-by-the-seat of our pants type of person, time management directly impacts our productivity level. Building schedules and planning are proven methods that directly impact our efficiency and ability to complete tasks on time. Did you know that time management can also have a direct impact on our stress levels? Research indicates that using sound time management strategies such as scheduling and building to do lists (among others) can help people achieve a greater sense of calm. Cool, right?

## Scheduling

### My Class Schedule | Fall Semester

Start Time: 7:30 AM Time Interval: 30 (in minutes)

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
7:30 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		
8:00 AM	Business: Lecture Bldg B, Rm 256	Physics: Lab Bldg J, Rm 309	Business: Lecture Bldg B, Rm 256	Physics: Lab Bldg J, Rm 309	Business: Lecture Bldg B, Rm 256		
8:30 AM						Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Applied Math Bldg H, Rm 100		Applied Math Bldg H, Rm 100		Applied Math Bldg H, Rm 100		
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM							

When most people think of scheduling, they often feel it is reserved for the super-organized, Type A personalities. For some, the idea of building a schedule is a form of anxiety in itself – as thoughts are often met with, “how will I be able to stick with this?” “If I have never been an organized person, how can be one now?” However, research indicates that schedules are meant for, and proven to work for, every type of personality. They help the most unorganized people stay focused.

***Are you all over the map when it comes to school work? Great, a schedule can help with that.***

***Are you terrible at meeting deadlines? Perfect, a schedule can help with that.***

***Do you do everything the night before? Even better, a schedule can help with that.***

## Where do we start?

The two most important things to think about when building a schedule are:

- how do I spend my time?
- what kind of a schedule is realistic for me?

## How do I spend my time?

When considering how you spend your time, conducting a **time inventory** is a beneficial way to really get a good look at what you are doing day in and day out. Statistics suggest that the average North American spends up to three hours (yes three hours) a day on social media. Research also indicates that on average a student will spend up to an hour trying to get themselves organized to study. **That is precisely four hours of time that “could” theoretically be spent on studying.** Examining your own daily routines is a great place to start.

***When conducting a time inventory, consider the following:***

What are my **responsibilities** (work, childcare, school, cleaning the house)?

What kind of **activities** do I do and how much time do they require (clubs, sports, exercise, spending time with friends)?

By better understanding your responsibilities and commitments you will be in a stronger position to decide how to spend your remaining time. **This will also help you to create realistic goals and a schedule that works for you.** Everyone is different. Spending three hours a night on studying may have been realistic for you last year, but this year it might only be one. Create a schedule that helps you maximize the time you have and trim the areas that require trimming. **REMEMBER: this is your schedule, and you might need an hour of social time to feel the most at ease** and therefor ready to work. That is ok. Rewards and “fun” time are a component of building a solid schedule and vitally important for success.

**FUN**

**is important!**

**Also**.... be mindful of **when your peak productivity time is**. If you are a night owl and find that cracking the books at 9 p.m. with an espresso is what really gets you fired up then note that and build your schedule accordingly. If you find that mornings bring out your creative genius, plan for the mornings. Whatever your style, in order to stick to a schedule, you must make it work for you. Your study times should align with **your inner clock** – nobody else’s.

***Once it’s built try to stick to it but recognize it’s not set in stone. Things can change and that’s ok.***

It might take a few times to find a routine that works for you. Maybe you’ll find one that sort of works that you’ll tweak throughout the process. Whatever you decide, know that some sort of a schedule is better than no schedule. ***If you’re a visual person, and a visual learner, you may find that having something in front of you that your forced to look at (put it on your fridge, your wall by your kitchen table etc.) holds you accountable.*** Accountability is a key component of success for many people.

## GOAL SETTING



*“The trouble with not setting a goal, is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.” – Bill Copeland.*

**Goal setting** is important because it can help you a long-term mission and provide short-term motivation.

When setting goals it is important to consider:

### What do you really want?

**Set goals for the semester, year, or program.**

Maybe your goal is that you want to pass or get a specific grade. For some, setting a goal might be that they simply want to submit all assignments on time. Whatever it is, it is yours. It can be as big or as small as you want it to be.

Write your goals down and look at them from time to time. They provide accountability and help keep people on track. **You can always change or modify your goals, but it's important to have a starting point and a sense of the direction you want to head in.**

### To Do Lists:

Why do people make them?

One of the biggest benefits of having a **to-do list** is to **help with organization**. Organizing your tasks with a list can make everything much more manageable and help you feel grounded. Seeing a clear outline of your tasks will help you stay mentally focused on what you have to do.

Many people build weekly to do lists and some people build daily. Whatever you decide, a to-do list should be short term and involve goals that fit into the bigger picture of your long term goals.

*An example of a **weekly** to do list might include the following:*

- Read chapter 3 and 4 of Anatomy and Physiology
- Read chapter 1 of Caring for Patients
- Write a reflection of the importance of following procedures while in clinical settings
- Study the procedure of changing a catheter
- Briefly re-read the lecture notes from this week and quickly summarize them



*An example of a **daily** to-do list might include:*

- Read for one hour tonight
- Cook a healthy meal
- Go for a walk
- Begin my reflection journal
- Quickly review the procedure and learn the first three steps well

## **Research indicates that lists work because:**

1. You have clarity on what needs to get done
2. You feel less stressed because there are no unknowns, **you can see everything**
3. It helps you prioritize what is the most important
4. You won't forget anything
5. You'll feel accomplished as you begin to make your way through the list and check things off
6. You'll stay organized
7. It helps you with planning<sup>i</sup>

## **Fun and Rewards**

Research also tells us that the better we feel about something we do, the more likely we are to want to do it again. From a behavioural perspective, **we are more likely to repeat a behaviour when we know that it is associated with something pleasant**. In addition to this, who wants to study for hours upon hours and do nothing else? Well there's always that one person.....but most people would agree that having something to look forward to while studying is half the battle. What that looks like can be different for everyone. <sup>ii</sup>

### **Some people reward themselves by:**

- Going for a walk
- Eating a treat (such as a piece of chocolate)
- Doing something they enjoy like listening to music, painting, watching really bad reality TV (my kryptonite).

Whatever it is, it is important to build it into your to do list to ensure you take time for yourself and **avoid burnout**. Our bodies and minds are not meant to function on an all work and no play setting.

But when factoring in “fun time” remember these three important words, “everything in moderation.” Don’t overdo it. There needs to be balance between work and play.

## READING AND NOTETAKING:

Being able to read and take good notes is quite possibly one of the most important qualities of a successful college student. Because you are inundated with so much information it is important to be able to read quickly and effectively while taking notes that are meaningful to you.

### ***Reading:***

When looking at the endless stacks of reading you're probably wondering, how am I actually going to read all of this material in the timeslot given?

**Breathe. There are strategies for that.**

***Before I even begin to read a chapter, I refer to the back of it.*** I read the summary and develop a quick understanding of what it is about. **Think of it like a map.** The review portion is the final destination where you should be after you've driven through the chapter, so to speak. The review questions (which are often used in assessment and evaluations) are kind of like pit stops. Important scenery that you need to take notice of. They help build the overall picture and are important in your comprehension. Often if you can answer some, or any of the review questions, you're on the right track.

After I've looked over the summary and read the review questions, I will flip to the front of the chapter. This seems like a lot of work to get started but what it is doing is **activating your mind so that you are not passively reading for the sake of reading. You are then beginning the process of reading for meaning or reading to understand.**

Reading for meaning is, like it sounds, reading so that you can make meaning of the material. Learning **Science indicates that when we activate our minds prior to reading a chapter we are more likely to remember the information.** This happens by attaching new information to the information we already have stored in our brains. It's important to ask yourself before starting:

- *Is there anything I already know about this subject?*
- *Have I learned it before? Can I draw on past experiences to remember anything?*
- *If this is something totally new, do I have any questions before getting started?*
- *Is there any terminology that I've never heard before?*

If so, it might be beneficial to look up those terms to build context for meaning.

### ***As you're reading.....***

1. *Check yo'self before you wreck yo'self!*
2. *Stop yourself & ask yourself!*

While we often think it's good to read a chapter from start to finish, this is only partly true. While it is important to finish a chapter, it's also important to stop and reflect so that reading remains an active process. **Note: if you want to really jack up your reading activation, read out loud. It forces you to be more accountable to the material on the page, as well as be actively engaged.**

### **Check yo' self:**

Stop yourself after a page or two. Does what you're reading make sense? Do you have any questions? If you have any questions, write them down. This forces you to think deeper about the content.

## **Stop & Ask yourself:**

If you were to teach the content that you just read to someone in 60 seconds, what would you say? Could you do it? Could you retell the most important points? Being able to quickly summarize what you've read will help provide awareness of how much you are actually comprehending and it will force you to synthesize or extract the important ideas quickly and effectively.

***Stopping to check your comprehension throughout is one of the most important things you can do in this process.***

Continue this process until the end of the chapter and repeat throughout.

## ***Note Taking:***

### ***Cornell and Harvard Methods:***

The Cornell and Harvard methods are similar notetaking methods (to those in reading we just discussed) that stress the importance of having key points as well as short summaries and questions. For the sake of this document, we are going to look at the Cornell Method. <sup>1</sup>

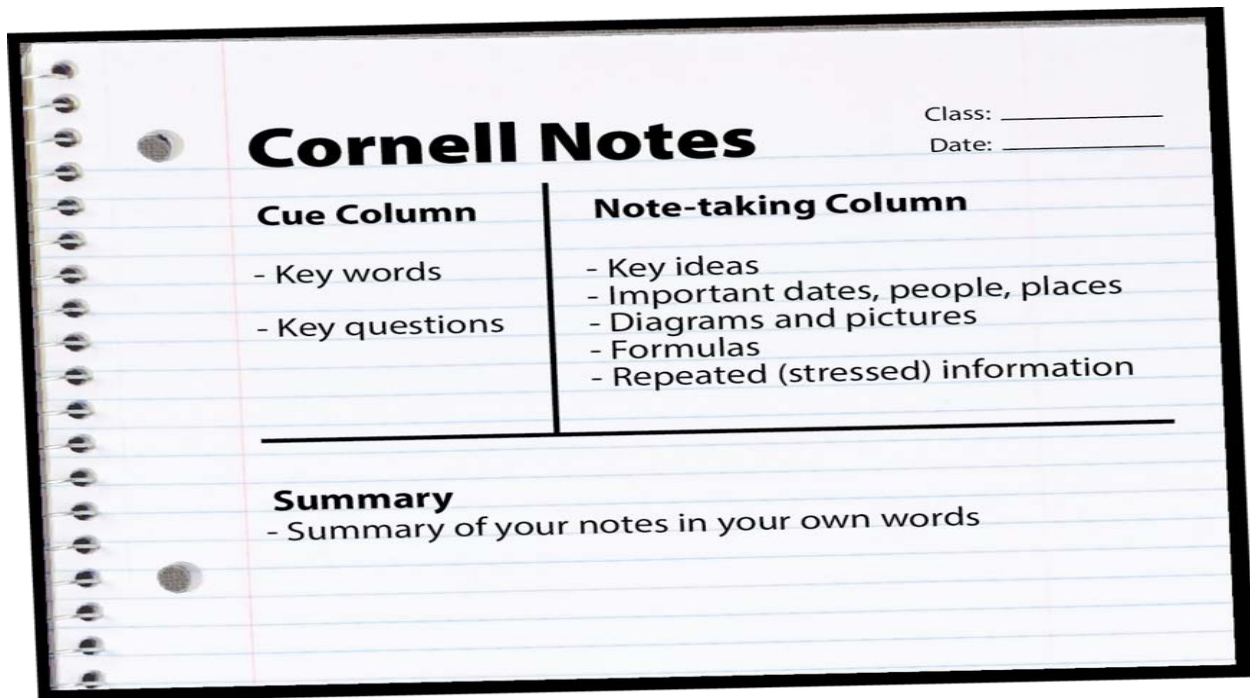
## **Cornell Method:**

**A way to organize information quickly and effectively (see below).**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://furtheredagogy.wordpress.com/2016/06/16/the-cornell-method/>





**1. Record:** During the lecture, use the note-taking column to record the lecture using telegraphic sentences.

**2. Questions:** As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. Also, the writing of questions sets up a perfect stage for exam-studying later.

**3. Recite:** Cover the note-taking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words.

**4. Reflect:** Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: "What's the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know? What's beyond them?"

**5. Review:** Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you'll retain a great deal for current use, as well as for the exam.

**Note\*\* Summary:** After each class, use this space at the bottom of page to summarize the notes on that page. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/>

### ***Important things to consider when taking notes:***

#### **Prepare:**

An old professor of mine used to say, “**Failing to plan is planning to fail.**” He was right. Preparation is half the battle. This means:

**Re-read your notes, check the syllabus/CSI to understand what you will be covering and how it fits into the overall theme of the class. Arrive on time so you’re in a good mind frame to take notes.**

#### **Listen:**

Sounds straightforward, right? But listening is half the battle. You can make strong detailed notes later but you need to understand what is being discussed before you can write about it. Listen actively and write the key points down as you go. You can summarize later; but make sure you include key points of interest from the discussion. Don’t be afraid to ask questions if you don’t understand.

***Tip\*\* Key points or the big ideas are usually included both at the beginning and at the summary of a lecture. Professors will also spend a lot of time on these.***

#### **Write only what is needed:**

Your notes are exactly that, your notes. You’re the one who is looking at them so write in a way that makes sense to you. That could mean drawing pictures, short scribbles of what you think is important, a few random key words, etc. Do what works for you. Learning effectively is all about discovering your learning style and that differs for every person.

#### **Organize your notes:**

For some students this might be using the **Cornell Method** or something similar. For others it may just be actively reading your notes a few times a day and summarizing them. Whatever the method, find one that works for you. This might involve testing a few before sticking to one.

#### **Review:**

***Learning Science tells us that when we review notes within the first 24-48 after writing them we are much more likely to remember them and understand them as the concepts are fresh within the mind.***

If you use the Cornell method, you don’t need to rewrite them. You can simply look at your key points and the summary. Re-reading notes brings the process full circle and reinforces your learning and understanding of a subject. <sup>3</sup>

Note: If you find you are unable to take notes quickly enough and need something to assist you in this process, there are many assistive technology devices that can help. Some are free such as **One Note**.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/learning/study\\_skills/skills/note\\_taking.htm](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/learning/study_skills/skills/note_taking.htm)

# 9 WAYS TO TAKE BETTER NOTES

A WEAK NOTE IS BETTER THAN A STRONG MEMORY

by @inner\_drive | [www.innerdrive.co.uk](http://www.innerdrive.co.uk)



1. PEN AND PAPER TRUMPS LAPTOPS

2. DO NOT WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN

3. USE ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

4. USE YOUR SPACE WELL

5. MAKE IT PERSONAL

6. DON'T WORRY ABOUT SPELLING  
OR MISSING A POINT

7. HAVE AN ACTION PROMPT AT THE END

8. FILE THEM AWAY NEATLY AFTER CLASS

9. REVIEW THEM REGULARLY

## STUDY TIPS:

### *Tip # 1: Study smarter not harder*

#### **What to study:**

It can be tough to know what to study when you are provided with so much information, all of which often seems important. But knowing what to study is half the battle of studying smart.

#### ***Some of the things to look for when studying are:***

- Big ideas
- Important points, dates, people
- Procedures
- Lists

If a professor spends a ***great deal of time*** on something in a lecture, or a chapter devotes a few solid pages to a topic, and or it turns up in the review questions, you can often bet it's going to be on the exam. In some cases a professor will stress what the important information is to know before a lecture. They will also usually provide a summary or wrap up at the end of a lecture. If this does not happen, revert back to your text as the **big ideas** are usually given more attention in a chapter such as words that are **bolded**, **side notes**, and **quick facts**.

### *Tip #2 Study Often*

*If you work on something a little bit every day, you end up with something massive. - Kenneth Goldsmith*

If you want to have the greatest impact on your studying, it can't be stressed enough how important it is **to work just a little bit every single day**. This could mean for 10 minutes, 20 minutes, or if you're really ambitious or have time, up to an hour or two. If you're doing something daily, over time you will develop a solid foundation for which a masterpiece can be built. If you think of it in terms of professional athletes, professional athletes do not become masters of their craft overnight. Instead they train and work a bit every day, sometimes more on some days than others. **The biggest thing that all successful people have in common is that they are consistent**. Now that doesn't mean that they don't have off days or failures or days when they just feel like they can't, however, they're consistent in that they keep trying. They keep swinging no matter how many curve balls the pitcher is throwing.

***According to learning science, the most effective studying is a distributed practice that sees you studying a little bit over several days and weeks. Doing so will help move information from short term to long term memory.***

Remember when we talked about **schedules**? This is where this comes into play. Schedules are important for distributed studying because you can organize your days or weeks so that you have regular sessions for each class. It can't be stressed enough that this does not have to be long study sessions, just regular. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day.

### **Tip #3 Study Somewhere that Works**

“Work, work, work, work” if you just heard Rhianna’s voice in your head, you know it’s hard not to be distracted when a good song comes on. That’s why it is very important to study in an area that is conducive to learning. What this looks like could be different for everyone. For example, some students prefer to study in a coffee shop (I have never quite understood this one, personally), some in an office, and others in the library. Whatever your preference, make sure it’s an area where you don’t find yourself distracted by what is happening around you.

**One of the biggest mistakes that people can make when studying is to study in their bedroom in their bed.** Why this becomes problematic is because your bed is intended to be your sanctuary. When you combine something that is high stress with something that is, in theory, meant to be stress free, your body will begin to associate stress with bedtime. This can include an inability to turn things off or fall asleep when going to sleep. On the flip side **you might also feel extremely tired when hitting the books and you need to get work done.**

**Similarly, studying in an area such as on the couch in front of a television isn’t beneficial either.** We often think we are able to multitask effectively, but the reality is that this can be extremely difficult. Today’s learner is often simultaneously watching television, while sending a text, while talking on the phone, while also reading. While it can feel like you are doing a great deal of studying in this time, this is **not effective learning.** Retention and encoding information in long-term memory comes as a result of being tuned in or active in the process.

However starting in one place doesn’t mean that you have to stay there. Some people may find that they need to adapt their study habits over time. This is ok. Like everything in college, even finding a good environment is a learning process.

### **Tip #4 Study with **who** works**

YOU ARE A PRODUCT OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT. SO  
CHOOSE THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL BEST  
DEVELOP YOU TOWARD YOUR OBJECTIVE. ANALYZE  
YOUR LIFE IN TERMS OF ITS ENVIRONMENT. ARE  
THE THINGS AROUND YOU HELPING YOU TOWARD  
SUCCESS - OR ARE THEY HOLDING YOU BACK?

- W. CLEMENT STONE -

LIBQUOTES.COM

Whether you’re a lone ranger or someone who prefers to work in groups, make sure the people you surround yourself with have the same goals as you. That doesn’t mean that you need to only work with the star of the class. It means **find people who are on a similar page who are working towards similar**

**things.** If you plan to study for a few hours, study with someone who also plans to study for a few hours and can stay focused.

**Whether you prefer to work alone or in groups there are things you can do to improve your studying success. These include;**

- Testing yourself
- Explaining things out loud
- Making cue cards and sorting into piles of ***stuff you don't know, sort of know, and really know***
- If you have a partner, asking one another questions
- If you're with a group, dividing reading and explaining what you've read to the group can really help increase understanding. In fact research suggests that **social learning** is one of the most beneficial ways to grasp tough concepts. Why? Because through sharing experiences new information is put into context in a way that makes content meaningful. People who retell information often inject personal memories and thoughts into the content. When this happens it paints a better a more complete picture for learners.

## Understand your learning style

Research suggests that people who study are more likely to retain information and form deep learning connections. In addition people who understand their learning style are much more likely to be successful in this process.



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Whatever your learning style is, make sure you find a method of studying that speaks to that learning style.

Remember when we discussed finding your key productivity time? Finding a learning style that works for you is equally as important. **Organize the material in a way that makes sense to you.**

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.advantagelearningcenter.com/college-preparation/learning-styles/>

## TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

### Dealing with test anxiety

There are multiple ways to deal with test anxiety. Half of the battle is recognizing it and understanding that it is something you can manage, even when it feels as though it is not.

**Some strategies that may help reduce test anxiety include:**

- ❖ Learn how to study efficiently: refer to the study skills section.
- ❖ Learn how to manage stress: that might include going for a walk, building in time for rewards, understanding how and when to take a break.
- ❖ Learning relaxation techniques: to keep calm before a test learn the deep breathing techniques. This can include the **3x3x3 rule**. Breathing in for three seconds, holding your breath for three seconds, exhaling for three seconds.
- ❖ Get plenty of sleep and eat well.
- ❖ Go to the bathroom.
- ❖ Do a **brain dump** before your exam: write down every single thing that you know about a subject. You can use this as a quick reference guide as you are writing your exam.
- ❖ Don't ignore a learning disability. If you need support, don't be afraid to access support. You are the driving force in your own success.
- ❖ Mimic testing conditions: that way it won't be such a shock to you when you sit down for a test
- ❖ Test yourself on the knowledge beforehand
- ❖ Talk to your teacher: make sure you know what you are being tested on. Even if you don't know all of the specifics, be aware of what is likely to be on the test. If your Professor does not tell you, refer to review questions in the book, as these often cover the big ideas and refer to your notes. Good notes are not long notes, but include the most important information.

### Multiple-Choice Test Taking Tips and Strategies

1. Read the entire question. ...
2. Answer it in your mind first before looking at the choices ...
3. Eliminate wrong answers. ...
4. Use the process of elimination. ...
5. Select the best answer. ...
6. Read every answer option. ...
7. Answer the questions you know first. ...
8. Make an educated guess.
9. Pay attention to these words: not, sometimes, always, never. An answer that includes always must be irrefutable.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.educationcorner.com/multiple-choice-tests.html>



10. Don't second guess yourself and only change your answer if you have a solid reason for doing so. If you can't rationally justify it, don't do it.

## **Essay writing strategies**

- Plan your major points
- Decide how much time you will spend on the essay (check point value)
- Don't waste time
- Write quickly and neatly
- Avoid fillers, get to the point
- Quickly review

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/why-lists-dont-work-and-how-change-that.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.jmccademy.edu.au/news/why-it-s-important-to-reward-yourself>