



Strategies for Studying, Learning, and Researching
By David Alderoty © 2014

Chapter 14) Strategies For Productive
And Pleasant Studies
3,110 words

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To Access Additional Information with Hyperlinks

After I complete a writing task, I select a number of websites from other authors, to provide additional information, alternative points of view, and to support the material I wrote. These websites contain articles, videos, and other useful material. The websites can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinks, which are the **blue underlined words**, presented at the end of some of the sections, subsections, and paragraphs.

If a link fails, use the blue underlined words as a search phrase, with www.Google.com or www.Bing.com. The search will usually bring up the original website, or one or more good alternatives.

Choosing a Course of Study

Choosing a Major, and Classes that You Are Interested in Studying

College, and graduate studies represent a considerable investment in time, effort, and money. If you select a course of study that you are **not** interested in, you will be faced with several years of drudgery and boredom. You will have to rely on your willpower and self-discipline, to force yourself to complete assignments and to attend classes. This can lead to low grades or failing marks, especially if you are distracted by activities you find more interesting and pleasing than your studies.

The idea here is to choose a course of study that you can enjoy, or at the very least tolerate. This should involve some careful thinking, Internet research, and perhaps some trial and error. Students often change their majors or concentrations during their first two years of college. Thus, trial and error is feasible, in most schools, as long as it does not involve failing grades.

For some people, choosing a course of study based on their long-term interests or hobbies is a good option. However, some students may not have any clearly defined interest in any of the available courses. In such a case, creating a list of courses in descending order of interest may be helpful. This involves placing courses that you think you might be interested in, on the top of your list, and courses you are least interested in at the

bottom of your list. This should be done on the computer screen, so you can easily rearrange the courses. Rearranging will probably be necessary as you obtain more information about each course. The information you need in this regard, is obtainable from your school bulletin, instructors, advisers, other students, and Internet research. The more information you obtain about the courses the more useful your list will be.

Keep in mind that the primary idea of the list is to facilitate your thought processes, and to help you determine what classes to take, and what classes to avoid. This list will also be helpful in choosing courses that relate to your occupational objective, and abilities, which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Choose a Course of Study that Relates to Your Occupational Objectives

Another important consideration is your vocational goals after you complete school. Your course of study ideally should be focused on your occupational objectives. This is not always feasible, because many students are unsure of their future occupations. If this is the case, you should start some exploration in terms of occupational objectives. This can involve talking to counselors, exploring occupations on the Internet, and talking to people that you know in various professions.

For additional information from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [Choosing a Course](#), **2)** [How to Choose the](#)

[Right Course](#), **3)** [20 top tips for picking a course](#), **4)** [Video: How to pick a course to study](#), **5)** [Video: How to Choose a Major](#), **6)** [Video: Choosing A Major](#), **7)** [Video: Choosing the Right Degree](#).

An Adequate Academic Background For the Courses You Take

Before Registering, Evaluate Each Class, to Avoid Failure

Classes in college and graduate school, often assumes the student already has developed a background in the subject. For example, an introductory course in college chemistry might be focused on students that are skillful in mathematics, science, and have completed two terms of high school chemistry. A focus of this nature may not be officially stated in the course bulletin, and there may not be any official requirements to register for the course. This is especially the case for introductory classes.

Advanced courses, often indicate the prerequisites in the course bulletin. However, this can sometimes be deceiving, because the bulletin may not provide enough details about the necessary background to do well in the course.

The idea to keep in mind is a student that has an inadequate academic background for a specific course, might have difficulty comprehending the coursework. This may require many

additional hours of frustrating study, which may lead to a low-grade or a failing mark.

To avoid the problems mentioned above, try to find out everything about a class before you register for it.

Especially important is the precise material that will be studied. If the material is unfamiliar to you, and you cannot understand the introductory chapters of the textbook used in the course, you may not have the required background. You can probably obtain information about the textbooks, and the class itself, from instructors. The information that you must seek and evaluate for yourself, relates to the actual material studied in the course, not whether the instructors or advisers, believe the course will be easy or difficult for you. However, if advisers or instructors indicate that a course is difficult, and many students drop out, be extra cautious, and be certain that you are well prepared, before you take such a course.

If You Register for a Course that is More Difficult than You Anticipated What Are Your Options

If you register for a course, and you are experiencing more difficulty than the other students in the class, you should evaluate your risks of a failing grade. Ideally, this should be done before you actually fail any tests. Failing is not an acceptable option in most colleges and graduate schools. However, there are three good options listed below.

Dropping a class that might lead to failure is a good option. This can be done without penalty in most schools if a class is dropped within the first week or two of the term.

Another good option for a class that might lead to a very low grade is to take the class for a pass-fail mark. In most schools the student can select this option, after the midterm test, or even later. Usually, pass-fail grades are not calculated in the grade point average.

A third option for difficult courses that might lead to failure is to invest **additional time**, and effort in studying the course material. This might require **many additional hours of study each week**. Ideally, this should include the services of a tutor, to ensure success. Many universities provide tutors for some courses, without additional charges. This usually includes mathematics and English composition courses.

Developing an Adequate Background for a Course

If you believe you do not have an adequate background for a course, which you are required to take, or want to take, you can develop the knowledge and skills needed for the course. Three strategies for developing an adequate academic background for a course are presented below.

Take any course that you believe will provide the academic background you need. This can involve a preparation course, which may be available in your college. However, the credits

from preparation courses usually cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements, but they can be used for financial aid requirements.

Another alternative to prepare for a difficult college-level course is to take a high school course, at a night school. This can be a good strategy for inadequate knowledge and skills in mathematics, science, and literature.

Self-study is another option to prepare for a difficult college-level course. This can include studying from the Internet, which has videos on many subjects, some of which are free online courses. The self-study should be started at least three months before you register for the college-level course.

An Important Idea to Keep In Mind

In general, there are three *primary factors that determine success in a college or graduate level course. These factors are* **1) adequate academic background that relates to the course, 2) adequate study skills that relate to the course, and 3) adequate time and inclination to carry out the necessary homework for the course.** Usually when the above factors are high in relation to a specific course, your grade will be high, and vice a versa.

Making Your Study Time Enjoyable

Strategies to Make Your Study Time Enjoyable

Try to make your study time as enjoyable as possible. This can be achieved by identifying factors that make your study time unpleasant, and eliminating them. In addition, incorporate anything into your study routine that makes your study time pleasant. How to do this is explained under the following eight subheadings.

How to Avoid Eyestrain while Studying

Staring at a computer screen, or book, for an extended time interval can cause eyestrain, and discomfort. This can be reduced or eliminated by periodically blinking a few times, and focusing your eyes on a distant object. Proper room lighting is also helpful. Lights should never shine directly in your eyes, or directly on a computer screen. Another way to reduce eyestrain is to increase the size of the text on your computer screen.

For additional information from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [Computer Eye Strain](#), **2)** [Video on reducing computer eyestrain](#), **3)** [Video, Rule to avoid eye strain](#), **4)** [Six Ways of Reducing Eye Strain Caused by Computers](#), **5)** [How to Avoid Eye Strain](#), **6)** [How can I make the text on my screen larger?](#), **7)** [Change webpage text size in Internet Explorer](#), **8)** [How to Change Font Size for Google Chrome](#), **9)** [How do I enlarge or reduce the font size on my web browser?](#),

- 10) [How to change the text size on the computer monitor,](#)
- 11) [Windows: To make the text on your screen larger or smaller](#)

How to Reduce the Strain on Your Body, While Studying

Sitting in a fixed position, for an extended time interval, while studying, can place physiological stress on your body, which results in unpleasant sensations. This strain can affect your blood circulation and your entire body, but most people are likely to feel the discomfort in their neck and/or back. This strain can be eliminated by periodically changing your position while studying. These benefits can be greatly enhanced by getting up from your chair every hour or so, for a five minute exercise break. This can involve some brief stretching, and some quick movements with the hands and feet. However, you should not let your exercise break distract you from your studies. You must be cautious in this regard, because some people may find it difficult to return to their studies.

For additional information from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [Video on avoiding back & neck pain when studying,](#) **2)** [Neck Pain From Studying: Is Your Posture the Problem?,](#) **3)** [How to Avoid Back and Neck pain while Studying,](#) **4)** [Is Your Laptop Hurting You?,](#) **5)** [Video: Ten Minute Exercise Study Break,](#) **6)** [Video: Study Break Exercises to Tone Your Whole Body,](#) **7)** [Video: Study Break Exercises.](#)

How to Avoid Fatigue While Studying

The exercise breaks, mentioned above, will help you reduce fatigue while studying. You can also avoid fatigue by avoiding large meals before studying, especially if the food contains a lot of fat or carbohydrates. Eating small meals that are easily digested before studying is not likely to result in fatigue.

The most important way to prevent fatigue while studying is to get seven or eight hours sleep each day. For some people, inadequate sleep during the night can be supplemented with one or two short naps, during the day.

For additional information from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [How to Fight Tiredness and Boredom while Studying or Working](#), **2)** [Video #7-Fatigue](#), **3)** [Video: What to do for tiredness? 3 Foods to Avoid](#), **4)** [How to Overcome Fatigue](#), **5)** [Preventing Mental Fatigue–Good Study Habits](#), **6)** [Top 10 tips to beat fatigue](#), **7)** [How to Fight Fatigue While Studying](#), **8)** [How to feel refreshed even after too little sleep](#), **9)** [Foods That Cause Fatigue](#), **10)** [Food and Fatigue: When Eating Makes You Tired](#), **11)** [Fighting fatigue - top foods, herbs, supplements and tips](#), **12)** The following video is very good, and it deals with fatigue, and memory. [How to Study Effectively & Avoid Becoming Fatigued While Studying by Michael J Clark](#).

Keeping Your Body in Good Physical Condition will Make Your Studies and Life More Enjoyable

Keeping your body in good physical condition is likely to help you indirectly with your studies. This includes a well-balanced diet, proper body weight, and regular exercise sessions. The exercise should be at least 30 minutes a day. This should include some stretching, cardiovascular exercise, such as jogging and/or fast walking. Resistance exercises with weights and/or springs should also be included in your exercise plans.

Many people find that the gym is the best place to exercise, but from the perspective of studying this may not be the ideal. This is because going to the gym is likely to involve an hour or two of preparation time, such as changing to gym clothing, and traveling to and from the gym. It can also involve time-consuming problems or distractions, such as waiting for exercise equipment. When you come home from the gym, you will probably be too tired to study.

A more efficient way of exercising is to have some simple equipment in your room, which you can use when you have an extra few minutes. You can also do your exercise during 15-minute study breaks.

For additional information, from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [The Benefits of Physical Activity](#), **2)** [Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity](#), **3)** [How Exercise Can Help Us Learn](#), **4)** [Studying the link between exercise and learning](#).

Avoid Cramming

Cramming is not an effective way to learn, and it can be very unpleasant. Cramming usually results in a low grade, and a loss of sleep. The loss of sleep is likely to result in fatigue, which can make it difficult to pass examinations.

The most efficient learning strategy, involve studying course material over a period of weeks, in the sequence that is presented in the classroom. This generally involves approximately the same time investment in homework each week. For example, for a three-credit course, you might study six hours **each** week. This can involve some additional study time to review material before a test.

A Comfortable Room for Studying, Without Distractions, and Proper Temperature

You should feel comfortable in the room you use for your studies, and it should not contain anything that will distract you from your work, such as loud noises. Most students would probably do best in a room without any noise.

The room temperature is important. You should adjust the room temperature so you do not feel cold or uncomfortably warm. The ideal temperature for studying will vary from one person to another. The room temperature that you feel comfortable with is also likely to vary, based on the clothing you are wearing, the time of day, the overall physiological state of your body, and the level of physical activity you engaged in

before you started your work. To obtain a truly comfortable room temperature, you will need an air conditioner for the summer. You also might need a small electric heater to provide additional heat during the colder months of the year.

Room lighting is very important. There should not be any light shining in your eyes or on your computer screen. Light from windows, table lamps, and floor lamps often cause these problems. You can adjust the position of lamps to reduce these difficulties. If light from the window is causing a problem, such as glare on a computer screen, pull the window shades down. Ideally, all the light should be coming from ceiling fixtures, and not from lamps or windows. This is because ceiling fixtures are unlikely to cause any of the problems mentioned above.

If you are studying in a public facility, such as a student lounge, or library, the above obviously does not apply. However, you can make adjustments with your clothing so you do not feel cold, or uncomfortably warm. If the facility is noisy, you can use earplugs, or find a different location for your studies.

For additional information from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [The Science of How Temperature and Lighting Impact Our Productivity](#), **2)** [Effective study environments](#), **3)** [Best Study Room](#), **4)** [Ear Plugs for Studying: Which Ones Do I Use?](#), **5)** [Does temperature impact student performance?](#), **6)** [Video: Study Room Makeover](#).

Studying with Other People

Some people study with other people, which may be more pleasant than studying alone. This works well for some students, especially if they have a study group that is focused on the same curriculum. However, study groups can be counterproductive if they distract you from the precise material that you must study to pass your courses. Even if study groups work well for you, it might be advisable to do some of your studies alone.

Studying with Music

Some people prefer to listen to music while studying. This might be a useful strategy for some students, if it is not distracting. This might be achievable with music without any vocalizations. The best music might be designed for studying, such as the YouTube music videos presented at the end of this subsection.

Most students might find that they study more efficiently without music. However, this loss of efficiency might be offset for some students, if they can study longer with pleasant music in the background.

For additional information from other authors, and for music designed for studying, see the following websites: **1)** [Does Music Help You Study?](#), **2)** [Should you listen to music while studying?](#), **3)** [Music Can Help You Study](#), **4)** [Music as a Study Aid](#), **5)** [Video: Research Suggests Listening To Music While Studying May Be A Bad Idea](#), **6)** [A video with music: Music to Help Study](#)

[and Work](#), **7)** [A video with music: 2 HOUR LONG Piano Music for Studying, Concentrating, and Focusing](#), **8)** [A video with music: BEST Music for Studying, Concentration, and Work](#), **9)** [A video with music: 1 HOUR LONG Music for Studying and Work, Concentration, and Focus](#), **10)** [This webpage has a number of videos with study music: COMPLETE Study Music Playlist \(from Study Music Project\)](#), **11)** [Study Aid for Super Learning and Memory: 2 Hours of Alpha BiNaural Beats for Study, Focus, Memory](#).

Concluding Ideas

Use Trial and Error, to Make Your Study Time Pleasant and Efficient

You should try various strategies to make your study time pleasant and efficient. This should include some of your own ideas. This involves trial and error to determine what works for you. You should modify a strategy, based on your own experience and needs, to optimize the pleasantness and efficiency of your studies.

For additional information, from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [How to Have Fun While Studying](#), **2)** [How to Enjoy Your Study](#), **3)** [How to enjoy studying?](#)

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