


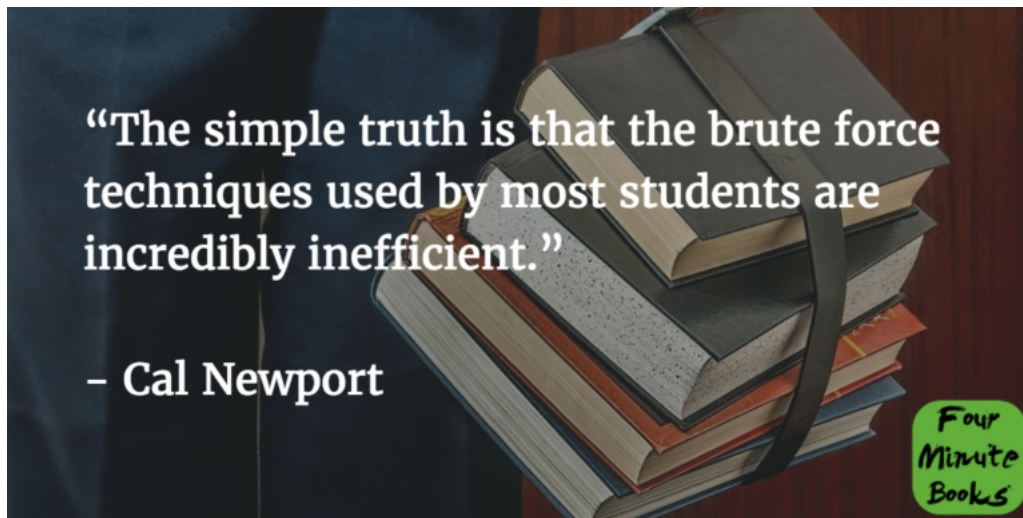
How To Become A Straight A Student Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/how-to-become-a-straight-a-student-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *How To Become A Straight A Student* gives you the techniques A+ students have used to pass college with flying colors and summa cum laude degrees, without compromising their entire lives and spending every minute in the library, ranging from time management and note-taking tactics all the way to how you can write a great thesis.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Cal Newport's message to the world has increased in gravity as he's traversed his own career path. *How To Become A Straight A Student* is the second book he wrote and it focuses on how students can ace college.

His fourth and fifth book, for example now deal with how to find and do great work, much later stages of your career. If you're still in the early stages, then this summary is for you.

Cal's blog is called Study Hacks, its original purpose being to help students – and it still is, but has expanded a lot to other topics as well. Of course, these lessons will help you more if you're in college, but I find they provide a good system for learning in general.

Here are 3 lessons to help you become a straight A student:

1. Study in focused, but short blocks rather than pseudo-working through the night.
2. Find your most common excuses with a work progress journal.
3. Quickly navigate your way through exams with the three P approach.

Do you have what it takes to be a straight A student? Let's get your equipment ready with these hacks!

Lesson 1: Increase focus while studying, decrease frequency.

I'm 99% sure you already know this and you've heard it tons of times, but I'm also 99% sure that you're still not doing it, so here it goes again: Study for less time, but be really focused when you study.

Last minute cramming, pulling all nighters and 14-hour workday may feel productive, but really just amount to a lot of what Cal calls *pseudo-working*, because your concentration takes massive hits from all the interruptions and constant energy drain.

The studies Cal looked at agreed on roughly **50 minutes being the ideal study session length**. As long as you spend those 50 minutes on nothing but one task (e.g. studying flash cards or writing a paper), three of these level 10 focus sessions per day will get you just as far as ten hours spent with an average focus level of 3 (just making these up to compare).

The first part of the equation to make this happen is to ruthlessly prioritize and manage your time with a calendar that's always available for you to update and that you strictly follow.

Part two comes down to eliminating distractions. No phones, Facebook feeds, web surfing or snacking!

Note: One of my longest blog posts ever shows you exactly how to eliminate 32 of the worst distractions you face every day.

Lesson 2: Keep a work progress journal to uncover your excuses.

This is really cool, I think Cal came up with it himself. It's called a work progress journal and it'll help you find and destroy the excuses you make in order to avoid your work.

Here's how it works: Each morning, you write down your most important tasks, including classes you have to go to, exams you have to study for, homework you have to hand in and even chores like fixing the TV or doing laundry.

At night, you check off everything you've accomplished. Pretty standard, right? But now, you have to **give an explanation for everything that didn't get done**.

You can bet that having to write down "I watched TV until 2 AM so I woke up groggy and couldn't focus" for the third time really, *really* sucks and you'll eventually show yourself that it's always the same excuses that keep you from doing what's important.

Since it's hard to believe yourself when you say that "you really can't change your late-night TV watching habits", you'll likely get tired of the excuse yourself after a while and procrastinating will become a lot less fun.

Cool, huh?

Lesson 3: Use the three P's to move through exams smoothly.

When it comes to taking exams, even the most well-prepared mind can take a spontaneous vacation, leaving you in a panic because all of your hard-learned notes seem to have gone out the window. That's why Cal suggests having a step-by-step plan in place for every single one, so you don't allow anxiety to take over.

Cal's recipe is called the three P approach and it includes:

1. **Planning.**
2. **Proceeding.**
3. **Proofreading.**

In the planning section, you'll simply flip through the entire exam, take stock of what questions you have to answer, and map out a quick order of how you'll tackle the questions, as well as allot some time to each of them. Keep a ten minute buffer at the end though.

Then you proceed to answer the questions, starting with the easier ones. Tackling a hard one first puts too much pressure on you (there's already enough of it thanks to the time limit), so get some quick wins to boost your confidence. After that you can move on to harder problems.

Lastly, use your last ten minutes (and any additional, remaining time) to proofread and correct any mistakes you find or add important information you previously left out.

It's tempting to skip this last part and just finish early, but don't. This kind of deliberate practice is what separates the average from the A student.

How To Become A Straight A Student Review

Everyone is different, which means every system you find has to be customized to your own needs. That said, I think what Cal describes in *How To Become A Straight A Student* is pretty solid and I find many of the techniques he outlines have worked for me in the past.

If you struggle with deadlines, procrastination, writing papers and showing up to class on time, this one's for you!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How to find the right time, place and energy to study

- A great system to take notes the right way
- Which questions to ask yourself to learn only what you have to learn, not more
- How to find a great thesis for your paper
- Why limiting your resources makes you a better writer
- Where to get inspiration for making your paper compelling
- How many passes you have to do to ensure A+ quality of your thesis

Who would I recommend the How To Become A Straight A Student summary to?

The 15 year old high schooler, who can benefit from learning these techniques early, the 20 year old college freshman who does not want to spend two extra semesters, and anyone who's already finished college, but wasn't happy with their performance.