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How to Force Yourself to Seriously Study

Co-authored by [wikiHow Staff](#)

Updated: September 14, 2019 | [References](#)

Studying is such an important part of school, yet it's often one of the things students struggle with the most. If you have a hard time studying seriously, you're not alone! Get into a habit of studying at the same time every day, break down your work into small tasks, and pick something to reward yourself with when you're done. With time, you can make studying a fruitful part of your day and break the procrastination and guilt cycle.

Method One of Three: Making a Schedule



1 Study at the same time every day so it becomes a habit. If you're a morning person, consider waking up before school to get in some study time. If you're a night owl, committing a few hours every evening might work best. Or, if you like to get things done so you can move on to more enjoyable tasks, you may want to commit to studying as soon as you get home from school every day.^[1]

If you don't already, try using a **daily planner**. You can use the calendar app on your phone or get a physical planner to write in. Schedule in your study time each day so that you remember to not book anything else for that time.

Keep in Mind: Your weekends might look a little different because you'll have a different schedule. You may need to schedule bigger blocks of time to study and work on projects over the weekend.



2 Make a **schedule** for exams so you can start studying ahead of time. As soon as you learn about a test, write it down in your calendar. If your teacher gave you a schedule at the beginning of the semester, take some time to input all the important due dates and exam dates into your planner.[2]

- For example, if you know you have a Spanish test next Friday and an Algebra test the following Wednesday, you'll know that you need to study for Spanish first.
- It can even be helpful to write in reminders for the weeks before a test to start studying! For example, if you have a big English test coming up in 3 weeks and you want 2 weeks to study the material, put in a reminder to start studying ahead of time.



3 Break down the material you need to learn into small sections. To avoid getting overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of what you need to do, break down the information into small, bite-sized pieces. Write down what each piece consists of so you know what you need to tackle when you sit down to study.^[3]

- For example, if your Chemistry test is going to cover 5 chapters and vocabulary words, your smaller sections could be made up of reading a chapter at a time and making vocab cards.
- Concentrate on getting 1 step done during each study block. When you're done, put a checkmark next to it so you can track your progress. This will help you feel more motivated and in control of your study sessions.



4 **Schedule time to rest and relax.** It isn't realistic to expect yourself to be able to study for 5 hours straight—your brain will need a break! You may need to take a short 5-10 minute break every 30 minutes. If you can go a little longer, try studying for 50 minutes before taking a 10-minute break. When you do take a break, stand up, walk around, get some fresh air, get a snack, or simply rest your eyes for a few minutes.^[4]

On a bigger scale, you may need to schedule a few “rest days” for yourself during exam season. If you know you'll be studying hard for a few weeks, set aside a day where you will free yourself from all studying obligations completely. This will be something to look forward to!

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Method Two of Three: Motivating Yourself



1 Keep a list of the reasons why you need or want to study. Whatever your reasons are, write them down on a piece of paper and keep them somewhere you can see them often. When you feel like skipping out on studying, read them over to remind yourself of why you need to work hard.^[5]

Reasons to study can range from wanting to get good grades so you can get into a good college to keeping a scholarship to simply not getting in trouble for getting bad grades. No reason is too big or too small to add to your list!

Tip: Keep in mind that you may not feel motivated all the time, and that is okay! What's important is that you can use self-discipline to keep yourself on track even in those times you aren't feeling the motivation.



2 Make boring information more interesting so it's easier to study. Ask yourself, “How does this material relate to my life?” or “How can I use this in my life?” For example, if you’re bored by the book you have to read for English class, ask yourself how you can relate to the characters in the book to keep yourself engaged. Or, if you’re struggling with studying for biology, get interested in how much you can learn about your yourself and all the living things around you.[6]

It can be difficult to be interested in everything, and some subjects just won’t captivate you. But, try your best to figure out how everything you’re learning can apply to your own life. That personal connection could spark enough interest to keep you going!



3 Set a timer so that you know there is an end in sight. Nobody wants to study for hours on end without a stopping point. Give yourself frequent, regular breaks during your study time. You could set an end time for the day, too, so that you know at the latest how long you'll be studying.[7]

- For your actual study blocks, set a timer for 30-50 minutes and then take a timed break before getting back to work. You'll study more efficiently if you know a timer will be going off soon.
- If you study right after school, you could commit to working until dinner time but then give yourself the rest of the evening off. Or, if you study at night, set a timer for 30 minutes before your bedtime so you can wind down.

Try the Pomodoro Technique: set a timer for 25 minutes; once the timer goes off, take a 5-minute break. Study for another 25 minutes, and then take another 5-minute break. Every 4 25-minute blocks, let yourself take a 15-20 minute break.



4 Reward yourself at the end of each study block to keep yourself going. This can be something really small, like getting to enjoy a piece of your favorite candy at the end of each block of time, getting to check Twitter or Instagram for 5 minutes, or taking a break to cuddle your pet.[8]

You could also plan a fun reward for the end of each exam to celebrate all your hard work! Getting coffee with friends, taking a long bath, buying something you've had your eye on—make it something that you love to do so it feels more meaningful once you've taken a test.



5 Enlist the help of a study-buddy. This doesn't have to mean you actually sit down and study together. Rather, this is a person you can check in with every day to help keep you on track. If you know you have to text someone at the end of the day to tell them if you hit your goals, it could help you stay motivated to study when you don't feel like it.[9]

You could ask your study buddy to check in with you if they haven't heard from you in a few days. This could get you back on track with your plans before too much time passes.

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Method Three of Three: Removing Distractions



1 Have a healthy snack and drink some water before studying so you can focus.

Hunger and thirst can be huge distractions when you sit down to study. Avoid eating sugary foods so that you don't crash later on. If you're going to drink caffeine, try to limit yourself to 1-2 cups of coffee or a single soda so that you don't get jittery.
[10]

Vegetables, fruits, nuts, cheese, popcorn, yogurt, and hummus are great snacks to choose from.



2 Boost your concentration by taking a quick walk before you study. Work out some nervous energy and boost your endorphins with a 10-15 minute exercise session. When you sit down to study afterward, it'll be easier for you to focus and retain what you're studying.^[11]

Tip: You could even try studying while you're exercising. Take your notes to the gym and walk on the treadmill while you read them over. Your body and mind will both feel better when you're done!



3 **Go someplace where you won't be distracted by your surroundings.** If you'll be tempted to clean your bedroom or if you live in a noisy space, you may need to find a new study location. Similarly, if you want to study with your friends but find you can't without getting distracted, you may need to set up some boundaries so that you can concentrate.^[12]

In general, a space that is clear of sights and sounds that will distract you is going to be the best for studying.

Tip: Keep a blank piece of paper next to you. When thoughts pop into your head for things you need to remember or do, just jot them down on the piece of paper.



4 Turn off all of your electronics that you don't need for studying. Or, if you need to use your phone for a timer, turn it onto airplane mode so notifications won't come through. Don't have the TV on in the background, and put your phone away somewhere you won't be tempted to look at it, like in a separate room.^[13]

There are also some great [apps](#) out there that you can use to help limit how much time you spend on your phone. Some can even block access to specific sites during designated times. Do whatever works best for you, whether that's getting offline altogether or setting up a few restrictions.



5 Be selective about whether or not you'll listen to music while you study. For some people, music is a huge distraction. But for others, some gentle background music can help them concentrate. Try studying with and without background music to see which way works best for you.^[14]

- If you're studying in a public place, playing some light music through your headphones can help you tune out everything else that is going on around you.
- In general, instrumental music is the best for concentration.



6 Set a timer for 10 minutes and get started! It may seem simple, but just starting is often the biggest hurdle to taking your studying seriously. Set a timer and commit to working on the task at hand. Once the timer goes off, set it for another 15-20 minutes before taking your first break. Once you get started, it'll be easier to continue.[15]

Even if you feel behind or like you should have been studying for weeks already, don't panic. Starting now is better than not starting at all!

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- Question

I have an entrance exam in 10 days and I keep daydreaming while I am studying. And I do literally anything to stop it. But nothing works. Please help me. What should I do?

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

Set a timer for 25-35 minutes and commit to focusing on the material you have to study. Once the timer goes off, take a 10-minute break.

Thanks! 7 7

- Question

I am easily unmotivated and distracted. I don't complete my task on time. I know I am not perfect but feel like a failure. I want to improve. But how? I mostly self talk negatively. Please help me.

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

Set some small tasks for yourself that you can complete within 30-45 minutes. After you complete a task, take a short 10-minute break. Once you start getting things done, you'll feel really accomplished and more motivated to keep going! When you notice that you're doing negative self-talk, stop and reframe those thoughts. Instead of saying, "I'm so lazy" or "I'm a failure," say "I can do hard things," and "It's okay if this is difficult."

Thanks! 14 0

- Question

I was top of the class but am now losing my position day by day. What should I do?

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

Figure out what is causing you to drop in class. Is it material you don't understand? Are you bored? If you need extra help with some material, ask a classmate or enlist the help of a tutor. If you're struggling to keep up, write down a study schedule and stick with it for a few weeks to see if that helps your grades improve.

Thanks! 9 3

- Question

When I study, I take notes and I have to lean my head on the table. Is this okay?

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

Whatever works best for you to study and take notes is perfectly fine! If you find yourself starting to fall asleep, though, try setting a timer for yourself for 30 minutes so you can take a break and refresh yourself before starting again.

Thanks! 19 3

- Question

What should I do if everybody is distracting me and my brother keeps snatching my laptop from me anytime I go to the bathroom or I leave for a minute?

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

You may need to go to a library or ask your parents to get involved so you can focus. A quiet place with few distractions is going to be the best for

your studying! If you can't go to the library, maybe you could study in your room and shut the door. Or, perhaps there is someplace else in your house, like a basement or spare room, where you could get some quiet.

Thanks! 11 1

- Question

I easily get distracted by my mobile phone; even if it is on silent, I keep checking it. Help me to get rid of this problem!

wikiHow Staff Editor

Staff Answer

You could try putting your phone in another room. Set a timer (on the stove or microwave) for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes of studying, you can go and check your phone. But don't keep it beside you if you can't resist looking at it.

Thanks! 25 2

- Question

I used to be a very good student but I just dropped drastically. What should I do about it?

Community Answer

Determine the source of what is causing you to drop drastically. Has something happened in your life lately to distract you or to reduce your motivation? It is important to tackle that particular issue head on. Also, don't think about your friends having fun and going out -- concentrate on getting the studies done first, then playing hard after as your reward. The article has plenty of helpful ideas.

Thanks! 1017 77

- Question

When I take breaks, I never go back to studying. What can I do?

Community Answer

Take any break stuff (coffee, snacks, magazines, etc.) into the room you've been studying in. At the end of your break, put distractions like phones or magazines somewhere that won't tempt you too much, out of sight. DO NOT WATCH TV ON YOUR BREAK! This will just make you complacent and you won't want to leave. Ideally, have your studying and breaks in a room with a minimal number of electronics.

Thanks! 409 35

- Question

I want to study but I am easily distracted. How can I motivate myself?

Community Answer

Sit in a quiet room to help with distractions. Make a study guide so you will

know what you have to study. Remind yourself of the consequences if you do not study.

Thanks! 252 23

- Question

How do I get rid of sleepiness while studying?

Community Answer

Have a cup of coffee or tea, but don't drink too much too quickly. Don't lay down while you study -- sit or stand to stay awake easier.

Thanks! 380 51

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Tips

- To keep on top of your studying, read over your notes every day from that day's lessons. You could even rewrite or retype the notes to help cement the information in your brain even more.
- Use class time as study time, too. Instead of using your phone or browsing the internet, focus on the lesson and take good notes. You'll feel better when you go to study if you don't have to relearn information you could already know.
- Don't neglect your **sleep schedule**—getting a good night's rest will help you retain information better and will give you more energy to get through those study sessions. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day for the best results.
- Its lot better to give your phone to your parents or siblings so that u can concentrate on studying. Also, if you need a break, don't get your phone out. Instead, try to do some art, crafts, or talk with a relative. Keep your break simple. Reward yourself after studying.

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Article Summary

To force yourself to seriously study, start by scheduling 1 to 2 hours each day that will only be used for studying. During your study time, work in a quiet, private space without distractions like video games or TV. If you start losing interest, motivate yourself to keep going by listening to rousing music, or doing movements like jumping jacks or shadow boxing. Additionally, plan a reward for yourself after you study, so that you have something to look forward to.

In other languages

Español:obligarte a estudiar en serio

Deutsch:Sich dazu zwingen ernsthaft zu lernen

Italiano:Obbligarsi a Studiare Seriamente

Русский:заставить себя учиться

Français:se forcer à étudier sérieusement

Tiếng Việt:Động viên bản thân học tập nghiêm túc

Bahasa Indonesia:Memaksa Diri untuk Serius Belajar

Nederlands:Jezelf dwingen om serieus te studeren

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More References



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JLTan

Mar 5, 2018

"I have a history test tomorrow and I feel really lazy. Yeah, REALLY. But seeing the fact that shame can be a motivator started motivating me to study. I didn't want to be laughed at again by my friends for failing my history test AGAIN ... Thanks, wikiHow!"..." more

Rated this article:

- MK

Manpreet Kaur

May 31

"I have my marketing exam tomorrow and was not feeling motivated. But with you, wikiHow, I'm just about to study hard. Thanks."..." more

- NS

N. Styles

Jul 3, 2018

"I was just a guy who never used to study, but now I have gained a lot because of wikiHow. It's a very helpful website. It has a lot to do with school things; that is why I'm now intelligent, it's all because of wikiHow. Thank you, wikiHow! "... [more](#)

- CM

Christian M.

May 3, 2017

"This article has really helped me to seriously take on study, for once. I am very happy to have read this. It may not sound like the most brilliant idea, but by simply putting away things that distract, that has helped me a lot. Thanks!"... [more](#)

- A

Anonymous

Feb 21, 2017

"I have learned not to procrastinate. I just plan my day by writing my to-do lists in my diary and tick everything according to its time. Now I am stress free and always do my things on time and never late."... [more](#)

- AM

Alicia Mehra

Feb 15

"I am preparing for a competitive examination and was deeply depressed with myself. However, after I read the article, I felt confident and my motivation was boosted. Thank you, wikiHow, for helping me. "... [more](#)

Rated this article:

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Anonymous

Mar 7, 2018

"I never really knew how to convince myself to study. All those tips were really helpful. I think the most important for me was the one with taking distractions away an tip about motivation. "... [more](#)

- SD

Serafina Dunn

Apr 25, 2017

"Eliminate distractions while planning to study. Don't waste your time

procrastinating, but start studying as soon as you know you have to study. Don't wait, start!"..." [more](#)

- A

Anonymous

Sep 12, 2016

"I thought music while studying would be a distraction as my parents would say, but this proved it wrong, and music shall motivate while studying."..." [more](#)

- SS

Samridhi Prakash Srivastava

Jul 6, 2016

"It helped me to concentrate more and learn things quickly, saved time to study more. I was not able to manage well with my personal studies. ."..." [more](#)

- MA

Mah A.

Jan 16, 2018

"The answers you gave for the questions was just great; felt as if I was asking it. The advice on the study schedule was very helpful."..." [more](#)

- AF

Arifa Farkhana

Nov 8, 2017

"When I have some doubts or when I want some tips, immediately I have to be search wikiHow and share my thoughts to my classmates."..." [more](#)

- KK

Kainat Kamran

Jul 25, 2016

"This article helped me a lot in all its ways. All of the advice and tips were very good! I loved them. Thanks a lot."..." [more](#)

- A

Anonymous

Aug 25, 2016

"Drop everything else and start immediately. Also, to take care of physical needs before you set out to study helped."..." [more](#)

- A

Anonymous

Aug 15, 2017

"Right now I've been scolded because of not studying, so I thought of searching on how. It really helped me a lot."

- SD
Sudikshya Dhakal

Aug 16, 2016

"It made me feel that I need more efforts to achieve my goal. With these tips, I'm ready to give maximum effort."

- RA
Ruqayyah Ahmad

Jan 29, 2017

"I'm still a student in Kenya and I'm sometimes lazy, but the advice I got here today I'm sure will help me."

- UK
Umar Kagu

Oct 3, 2016

"This article really helped me a lot. It mentioned and solved almost all my problems. Thank you so much!"

- A
Anonymous

Jan 22

"wikiHow is like magic. It can tell me everything I want to know. Thank you very much for the articles."

- AS
Abhishek Shakya

Jul 10, 2016

"I found these suggestions very helpful to study and for securing really very good grades in my tests."

- NB
Nick Black James

May 24, 2017

"I just need to be better organized and do the important stuff instead of focusing what I kinda know."

- A
Anonymous
Jan 19, 2017
"I was just distracting from studying and didn't know how to solve that problem. Now I can do this."
- SK
Simran Kour
Oct 16, 2016
"I read this article, and I am improving myself. My parents are very happy with me. Thanks a lot!"
- A
Anonymous
Oct 30, 2016
"Using white noise while studying helps when my mind is so busy and can't be focused on a subject."
- PS
Paleho Silvanus
Dec 10, 2017
"First point is the most important point for me: Stop what you are doing and start immediately."
- A
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Anonymous
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much."

- A
Anonymous

Apr 9, 2018

"Specifically, the motivational speeches and music helped me a lot. Thank you, wikiHow."

- A
Anonymous

Sep 24, 2017

"My Chemistry and Physics are poor. Even the maths I was good at are getting low."

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