



5 study tips for a well-balanced study session

Finals are coming! Honestly, time has blown by! If you have not already begun, this is your personal reminder to study for those finals and everything in between.

Although you *can* stay up for 16 hours straight on coffee and red bull to write your 20-page reflection paper, this is not your only option. Why not work smarter, not harder? In this post, I share five tips for a well-balanced study session (emphasis on well-balanced).

Tip #1: Use the L-STAR System. The L-STAR System was covered in ACUNI; however, it has been a while. To recap; it is a 5-step system for efficient studying which focuses on:

- **Listening** – The key here is not just listen, but *actively* How can you do this when everyone is masked? Try to sit close to your professor during class. Take notes while the professor is speaking. If you know you'll get distracted on your laptop, take notes by hand.
- **Setting It Down** – Basically, I am asking you to be a multitasker here. Listen and write down what you hear in a way that will make sense to you. Find the notetaking system that works best for you. Note: try exploring different notetaking systems for your different classes.
- **Translating** – Writing your notes is one step; reviewing them is another. Make sense of the material, and if you want to, try rewriting your notes to clarify your thinking clearer or add to it. *Pro Tip* – *If you prefer to learn through visuals, try color coding with pens or highlighters.*
- **Analyzing** – Save yourself the aches and pains of cramming before finals by periodically returning to and reviewing your notes for understanding. What did I mean when I wrote this material down the other day and why is it important? If something does not make sense to you, this is the part where you take advantage of your professor's office hours and ask your questions. Utilize the [Writing, Math, and Business fellows, as well.](#)
- **Remembering** – It is also important to think strategically about how you can memorize what you learned. Do notecards work for you? Do you need to think

through concepts out loud? Consider teaching the material to someone. The more you think and talk through the material, the more you will remember.

Tip #2: Set a goal for yourself. It might be a pretty obvious tip, but you would be surprised how many people do not set goals. Start with the overall goal. If this is to study for an exam or write a final paper, start there. Once the outline for the goal is set, you can begin to build out a strategy. How many hours will you study for a day, a week, a month? How many pages will you write a day? A week? A month? This will help solidify what you are working towards.

Sometimes ambitious goals can burn us out; it is important to revisit goals so that we can sustain the energy to complete them. Ask yourself why does my goal matter? Giving your goals a why further helps think about the bigger picture.

Tip #3: Reward yourself. If you struggle with motivation, little treats can help. When you set goals for yourself, be sure to set milestones and rewards for accomplishing these. For example, “Once I write 3 pages for my religion class, I can play Call of Duty for an hour.” Or, “Once I translate all my notes for ethics, I can head to the basketball game at LSC.” Having these milestones can give you “mini wins” to look forward to. You can also go all out and make this into a friendly competition with your friends.

Tip #4: Find an accountability partner. An accountability partner is someone who will, well, keep you accountable to your goals. In return, you will keep them accountable to their study goals. This can take many forms. This can be a 7pm text from a friend reminding you that the last episode of Squid Games can wait, but your College Writing 1 class cannot. It can be a motivational meme sent to one another. You can also choose to study together a couple of times a week. Overall, this person will be your cheerleader and #1 motivator. Choose someone you trust and who will push you to be your best academic self.

Tip #5: Know your preferred study environment. It is important to understand your study environment. Ask yourself, do I work best alone or around other people? Do I need complete silence or am I at my best with background music? Once you understand what your prime study environment is, it will be much easier to begin your study sessions. For instance, if you cannot concentrate in complete silence, then you know your best bet is to study in Maguire Commons as opposed to a private room in the library.

Finally, listen to your body and mind. Give yourself time to study but also build in time to sleep, eat, and relax. You got this! Happy studying 😊

For more study tips, stop by Maguire Hall Office 238.

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Check out these additional resources:

[Study Environment Inventory](#)

[SMART GOALS](#)

[L-STAR and note-taking handout](#)

Works Consulted

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