



Secret Study Hacks

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It's true: not all methods work for every person, but, with a little bit of trial-and-error, you can find the methods that work for you and stick with them like your life depends on it. Or, at least, like your grades do.

While nothing replaces good old fashioned hard work, every little bit helps when it comes to increasing your efficiency in college (because we know it can be overwhelming at times).

The following study hacks make student life simpler by helping to increase productivity levels, boost focus, help concentration and eliminate distractions.

Control your focus.

Sometimes, you're your own worst enemy. You can literally block yourself from getting distracted by websites, email or anything else computer-related with the apps like, [SelfControl](#) (for Mac), [Cold Turkey](#) (for PC). There are also similar options for [Android](#) users.

Download study apps.

You're probably aware that there are more student [apps](#) than you could ever need or want – choose one or two that suit your study needs and utilize them.

If you feel they aren't working for you, try out a different type.

Eat.

Yep, you read that correctly – we made a list that included one of the basic human needs on it. Because we know that some students need to be reminded to eat. Eat healthy, nutritious (and, hopefully, delicious) meals. This is kind of a given seeing as your brain needs food to function.

Search online.

Search outside study resources via the web. Google your subject – there are often great resources from other colleges that may have practice quizzes, for example. If you enter "site:edu [your subject] exam" into Google, you will be able to access exams at different colleges with questions pertaining to your subject for study practice.

Or, YouTube may have someone explaining topics you're studying in layman's terms. There are endless channels offering free tutorials, like [CrashCourse](#), [Khan Academy](#), [Brightstorm](#), [Bozeman Science](#) – just to

name a few.

A quick search will likely lead you to a wealth of resources!

Jazz up your notes.

Add visual prompts and colors to your notes to help you recall important details, both of which can aid in your memory recall.

This idea stems from [mind mapping concepts](#), which are basically thought diagrams, said to be much more effective in terms of learning than text-based notes.

There are even [mind mapping programs](#) for those interested (but creativity, pens and paper, work just fine, too!

Memory aids.

Try using different memory aids like notecards, etc. These aids come in handy for [memorization techniques](#). You may find it helpful to repetitively quiz yourself on the key aspects, facts or data you're trying to memorize.

Mnemonic Devices.

Circa grade and middle school, you'll likely recall learning the order of operations through [mnemonic devices](#), (Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally), the planets (My Very Earnest Mother Just Served Us Nine Pickles), the great lakes (HOMES) and so on.

If you didn't learn those exact variations, it was probably something similar.

The point is, there's nothing stopping you from creating your own to help you remember the material for your advanced chemistry test.

You can easily remember key concepts, sequences and whatever else you need to learn by creating your very own relatable story. Come up with something you *know* you can remember and stick with it. It will actually help!

Organize your materials, categorizing them by subject or chapter.

This will help you sort the material by subject matter, visualizing which aspects go together.

Believe it or not, it actually helps you understand the scope of the topics you're learning and categorizing them allows you to see how everything fits together as a whole.

Rewrite your notes by hand.

Go old school and rewrite your notes by hand. [Studies](#) show that when you take the time to rewrite them by hand, you actually learn more effectively than when using your computer, tablet or laptop.

Listen to music.

Choosing the right type of music to listen to while studying can enhance your productivity, motivation and focus levels.

Certain genres of music are actually recommended for studying – known as “music for the mind.” [Study music](#) should enhance concentration, focus and allow you to work for longer periods. It should never be counterproductive or distracting – no matter what genre you decide on.

Make a cheat sheet you'll never use.

Though you'll obviously never use a cheat sheet during an actual exam or quiz, it can help to create one because in order to do so, you'll need to sift through all of your notes and materials to find the key items and rewrite them on your sheet.

Doing so helps you recognize what you need to learn, and rewriting what you need to learn helps you remember it.

Sleep.

Again, it's a basic human need that, unfortunately, needs to be stated. Get plenty of rest while studying (and before the test or quiz). Your body needs to sleep to think properly.

A good night's rest is one of the most basic ways you can improve your score because it will help improve your ability to think *logically*. [Sleep affects your cognitive function](#), thus, your test-taking abilities. Enough said!

Study early.

Start studying early, instead of your usual cramming session. Nobody ever sets out to cram because it's a great idea – they do it because of poor planning.

Plan out your study routine ahead of time so that you're not trapped into a cram session, having to lose sleep (and, likely, not eating properly) as a result.

Poor planning tends to cause the domino effect – other bad habits start to follow suit because of time constraints, convenience, necessity, etc. Now that you're aware this happens, avoid it like the plague.

Switch settings.

Vary your study settings – literally. [Studies](#) show having a dedicated study area no longer works in your favor. Avoiding a standard space actually benefits you because the mind makes subconscious pairing between your atmosphere and the material.

This means, if you constantly in the same space, you would perform best taking the exam in that space. If you change up your space, your mind will associate all of the spaces you are studying in and adapt more easily to your test-taking surroundings.

Teach.

Teach someone else the material you're trying to learn. Teaching someone else is *such* an effective way for you to better understand the material, plus, you'll earn karma points for helping out a classmate who needs a little extra help!

Teaching is the best test (before the actual test) to know whether or not you know the concepts.

Why do you [learn through teaching](#)? If you're teaching someone the material and you find you cannot answer basic questions about it, then you know you need to go back to square one. It's a simple way to discover if you have a basic grasp of the concepts.

Turn on the lights.

[Light helps your brain focus](#), affects visual clarity, psychological factors and the wrong types of lighting can contribute to off task behavior.

The best type of lighting for maximum productivity (which you obviously want for studying) is soft and natural, though still as bright as possible so you can see clearly.

If your lighting is too dim, it will affect focus and visual clarity. Lighting that is too bright (like fluorescent lighting, for example) can contribute to getting off task.