

# HOW TO STUDY AT HOME (WITHOUT GETTING DISTRACTED)

## 1. Try Active Studying

Active studying is as simple as asking questions before, during, and after study time. Not only does this help to give your study session direction, but it also helps keep you on track and reflect on how to improve for your next study session!

Questions to ask yourself before you study:

- What am I about to learn?
- What do I already know about this subject?

Questions to ask yourself while you study:

- How does this information fit into a bigger picture?
- Do I understand what I have just read?
- Can I paraphrase it?
- Are there any key words or ideas that I need to write down? Why are these words and ideas important?

Questions to ask yourself after you study:

- What can I take away from this study session?
- What do I need to review or learn next time?

## 2. Get A Good Night's Sleep

Students of all ages should get at least eight hours of sleep every school night. It's the best way to ensure that the brain is refreshed and ready to process all of the information learned during the day. It may be tempting to stay up late to cram, but it's more beneficial to get enough rest.

A full night's sleep is especially important the night before a test—a good night's sleep makes you more alert and improves memory for test material, leading to better test results.

## 3. Have A Designated Study Area

Whether it's the kitchen table or the desk in your bedroom, create an area to study that is a designated study zone. Try to reserve your bed for sleeping and avoid studying in it (it can be all too easy to take a nap!). Most importantly, keep your study space clean and organized so you can put more time into studying.

## 4. Eat Properly

Don't forget to eat! Your body (and brain) needs fuel to help stay in top form. Plus, it's difficult to focus when your stomach is growling. Have healthy snacks while you study, but make sure they're prepared in advance so you don't spend too much time away from your work. More time away means more opportunity to be distracted!

## 5. Create A Timetable

Creating a timetable helps organize your time, schedules your breaks, and is especially useful when you have multiple subjects to study. Write your schedule down so you can remember it and refer to it often. Set reasonable limits for how much time you spend studying each day, and break your study session up into manageable chunks of time.

## 6. Use A Timer

Use a timer to help keep track of time and to make sure you stick to the timetable you created. Setting a timer helps keeps you focused on the task at hand, committed to working until the timer goes off, and helps keep you on track to cover all the material you need to. Above all else, it helps keep your break time effective and guilt-free (because you've earned it!)

## Reference:

Oxford Learning Centres, Inc. <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/tips-for-studying-at-home/>

## DEAL WITH ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND STRESS

**Anxiety** is a treatable condition that anyone might experience. To combat it:

1. Exercise more, even if it's just a little bit more. You can follow an exercise video and do some exercise at home. (Click <sup>1</sup> for a video link)
2. Breathe in deeply, hold it, and release slowly repeat at least 10 times.
3. Stay on top of your tasks with To-Do lists or action programs. Schedule important tasks for when you're more focused.
4. Keep a stress diary, write down the stresses that you experience, and record any anxious thoughts that you have. After a few days, analyze your diary and explore possible causes and triggers. Once you've identified these, you can take action to deal with them.

**Depression** is one of the most common and natural human emotions. To combat it:

5. Talk about your feeling to someone who makes you feel safe and cared for.
6. If a task seems too difficult, do not despair. Break the task down into even easier steps and start again more slowly.
7. Find ways—both big and small—to help others: volunteer, be a listening ear for a friend, do something nice for somebody.
8. Go for a walk, get some sunshine and fresh air. Express yourself creatively through music, art, or writing.

**Stress** can be enhancing. You can reach higher levels of performance and well-being under constant or even increasing stress. Your mindset is an important factor in determining your response. Continually elicit an enhancing stress-mindset by acknowledging, welcoming, and utilizing your stress.

9. Think Positively, replace self-sabotaging thoughts with something better. Turn “My ideas are worthless, and others won't want to hear them” into “My ideas are valuable, and others will be excited to hear them”. Visualize yourself being excited about your ideas and notice the interested faces of others.
10. Eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water throughout the day, instead of caffeine, alcohol, energy drinks, and eat several fruits (e.g., bananas) as healthy snacks.
11. *Stanford Mind and Body Lab* offers a Rethink Stress Intervention, which can help adults to rethink their stress and then build the stress mindset. You might also find some helpful online resources for you, such as the short videos about stress mindset, click<sup>2</sup> and spend a few minutes to have a look.

**If you do feel anxiety, depression, or excessive stress for a period (≥ 2 weeks), we strongly suggest you seek professional help from a counselor, or at least to talk to your families or teachers.**

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Exercise at home:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJRa9yY7KR0&feature=youtu.be&list=PLupHtO3vhYkGelwPf\\_InNy6wmef\\_ZShn\\_X](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJRa9yY7KR0&feature=youtu.be&list=PLupHtO3vhYkGelwPf_InNy6wmef_ZShn_X)

<sup>2</sup> Stress mindset intervention: <https://mbl.stanford.edu/interventions-toolkits/rethink-stress-intervention>

### Other useful videos:

Ten tips for focusing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1UaU6O59tg>

Make a good study plan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRE0WicGz4I>

HelpGuide <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/coping-with-depression.htm>

The Growth Mindsets Project Team (Principal Investigator: Dr Shimin Zhu, [growth.mindset@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:growth.mindset@polyu.edu.hk))