

List of study habits

1. *Provide a good study space.* Create a dedicated space [eg not just the dining room table when food had been cleared away], a good chair, a table with enough space for books, papers, pens, laptop etc and good lighting.
2. *Avoid distractions.* No cell/mobile phone, no telephone in the room and incoming calls require messages to be taken or left on a machine, not passed on, no TV in the room or nearby. Some kids do better with a radio on and others find it impinges on their learning]. If necessary, especially if there are lots of young children in the house, put up a 'quite. Do not disturb' sign during study periods.
3. *Study timing.* Work out the time of day that you study best. Some are better in the morning and others at night. This can also be influenced by sporting commitments eg. early morning rowing commitments make kids tired in the evening. Stick to a routine and create a regular study schedule. Learning regular study habits is a key to successful and easy learning.
4. *Set schedules and goals* Don't just open your books and charge in, but set up a schedule and some goals. Eg. I will study chemistry for 1 hour then biology for 30 minutes and when I have finished I will know about atoms and oxygen utilization. Before you start, define those objectives. A few minutes planning will save you hours of wasted time. And you will feel, as you go, how much you have accomplished.
5. *Managing time.* To make sure you cover all that you need, set long term schedules, especially around exam time. You might benefit from a bulletin board or a large calender with spaces to write stuff in. A diary is important here. The amount of time you can do homework will depend upon your age. At junior/primary school an hour is plenty, whereas at high school you can do more than that, a few hours is possible if you make it fun and don't just grind through it all. Avoid procrastination – don't kid yourself. When faced with an obstacle, charge at it and don't avoid it. .
6. *Making study fun.* Lets face it, study is never going to be a riotous time of fun. But you can do things to make it at least a bit of fun. And change the subject you study every 30 -60 minutes. Keep variety going. Spending a whole night on chemistry provides a law of dimishing returns. Another useful strategy that I used and passed on to my kids is to create surprises. If you have to study 5 things, put the names onto pieces of paper and put them into a hat, so after 30-60 mins you pull out another study subject and get surprised by what it is. It is a small thing, but it helps. And alternate different ways of studying eg. reading, drawing, internet searching. After you have learnt things, stand up and give a talk to imaginary students, making your talk as funny as possible. In the privacy of your room you can say anything you like to your imaginary students. And you can imagine teachers sitting in the room having to listen to you as you tell them what you think. regular, scheduled breaks Walk around talking to yourself. Create study questions?
If you are getting really angry and frustrated, have a break and go for a walk, talk to yourself about it and start again.
7. *Incentives and rewards.* Create your own incentive successfully completing a task. That might be a TV show or phoning a friend. It might be something in the kitchen or a walk. Be disciplined about not taking that treat until you deserve it. Don't let your parents be the ones to control these things.

For special projects such as term papers, design projects, long book reviews, set up a special incentive

8. *Think critically.* It is hard enough to learn what you have to learn without thinking too critically about whether you believe what they say. But if you learn to just look at the information, summarize things in your own words and put a mark against what you are convinced of versus what you find a bit hard to swallow you will begin to think critically, which will stand you in good stead in the future. This is particularly important now that there is an internet. There is a vast difference between internet information [which may or may not be true], knowledge [which is true but useless unless intergrated and applied] and wisdom [the ability to use knowledge in your life in wise ways]. Thinking critically will help you start to sort this out. .
9. *Understand your learning style.* Everyone has a style of learning which suits them best. Some are good at taking in information by listening, stories, etd.. I am not one of them. Others are visual, and learn best by pictures, graphs, etc. some learn well by reading, others don't. And some learn best kinaesthetically, ie. by doing things. It is important to think about how you learn best and to set your study methods up accordingly eg. if you are visual, draw pictures of what you are learning. If you are kinaesthetic, act out in your room whatever you are learning, running around like the components of an atom, calling out to the walls of your room what you are and what you are doing.
10. *Memorizing.* Take notes during study and make flashcards for quick review of key facts. There are tricks to making up memory aids. Only use memory aids when you need to – to understand is better than to memorize. But there is no doubt that you need memory aids for many things. There are websites that talk about how to do this. I have one of my own that I wrote for medical students [<http://www.bruceroobinson.com.au/Memory%20Aids.htm>]. The keys points are to make the memory aid easy and to make it active.
11. *Quizzing.* When you have finished ask someone, usually one of your parents, to quiz you on what you have learnt. Textbooks usually have questions for review. Your parents don't need to know a lot about the subject. If they, or you, can create a situation into which your knowledge can be applied that is a good way of checking whether you have learnt it well. This called problem based learning and it is something we use a lot in medical school. Another way to do this is to walk around your room imagining you have given a lecture on the subject and students are asking you these questions. Answer them out load. Repeat the process.
12. *Cooperative learning.* Find some other students who are studying the same thing and learn together. Set a time to quiz each other. Be careful not to end up doing everyone else's learning for them.
13. *Take responsibility.* Don't rely on your parents to nag you fo study, sitting around watching TV until one of them asks you when you will be studying, or 'havent you got any homework?'
14. *Tests.* Talk to your parents about tests. They can help you feel confident for them. It can be very stressful for some students and they can help you. Cramming for long hours the night before a test is not the best – if you do what is listed above you wont need to. You will be able to get a good night's sleep.
15. *Tests.* Before you start, take a deep breath, relax, read the instructions Bring an extra pencil just in case. And remember to carefully read the directions before

starting. A few extra minutes doing this will avoid big mistakes. And take the 3-step approach. Answer the easy questions first, skipping all others. Then the ones which you can answer but you have to work harder for. Then the hard ones. Allow enough time for all questions though, and don't spend all your time on the easy ones. It is easier to get the first 30-40% of marks but harder to get the last 30-40% to get an A.