

# STUDY HACKS

*Small changes. Big difference. No magic required.*

Studying does not have to mean hours at a desk feeling miserable. These are evidence-based strategies that actually work - pick one or two to try this week.

## YOUR SETUP

### Create a Launch Pad

Have one place where you study. Keep it clear. Your brain starts to associate that spot with focus - like a mental shortcut.

### Phone on Silent, Face Down

Not on vibrate. Not across the room. Face down, silent, out of your eye line. Even seeing your phone reduces your ability to concentrate.

## HOW TO ACTUALLY LEARN

### Test Yourself, Don't Just Re-read

Re-reading notes feels productive but barely works. Instead: close your book and write down everything you remember. The effort of retrieving information is what makes it stick. This is called active recall, and it is one of the most powerful study techniques that exists.

### Space It Out

Studying a topic three times across a week beats three hours in one sitting. Your brain consolidates information while you sleep - use that.

### Teach It to Someone

If you can explain a topic out loud - to a friend, a pet, or an empty chair - you understand it. If you get stuck, that is exactly where to focus next.

## WORK WITH YOUR ENERGY

### The 25/5 Rule (Pomodoro Technique)

Set a timer for 25 minutes. Work on one thing. When it goes off, take a 5-minute break - stand up, stretch, get water. Then go again. Four rounds = one proper study session. It works because it removes the dread of "I have to study for hours."

### Know Your Peak Time

Are you sharper in the morning or evening? Do the hardest subjects when your brain is at its best. Save easier tasks for low-energy times.

### Start with Two Minutes

Cannot face starting? Tell yourself you will do just two minutes. Most of the time, you will keep going once you have begun. Getting started is the hardest part.

## TAME THE DISTRACTIONS

### The "Later" List

Keep a scrap of paper next to you. When a random thought pops up - "I need to text Sam" - write it on the list and go back to studying. You are not ignoring it, just parking it.

### One Tab, One Task

If you are working on a screen, close every tab you do not need. Open only the one thing you are working on. Every extra tab is a temptation your brain does not need.

## MAKE IT STICK

### Use Tiny Flashcards

Write a question on one side, the answer on the other. Shuffle them. Test yourself. Physical cards work brilliantly - or use an app like Anki or Quizlet.

### Connect the Dots

New information sticks better when you link it to something you already know. Ask yourself: "What does this remind me of? How does this connect?"

### Write It, Don't Just Highlight

Highlighting feels useful but is mostly passive. Instead, write short summaries in your own words after each section. Even a single sentence like "This topic is about..." forces your brain to process the information rather than just skim it.

## LOOK AFTER THE MACHINE

### Sleep Is Not Optional

Your brain processes and stores what you have learned while you sleep. Pulling an all-nighter before an exam actively makes your performance worse. Aim for 8-10 hours.

### Move Your Body

A 10-minute walk, some stretches, or a few minutes of dancing between study blocks boosts focus and memory. Movement is not a reward - it is part of the process.

### Water and Snacks

Your brain is roughly 75% water. Even mild dehydration affects concentration. Keep a water bottle on your desk and snack on things that release energy slowly - nuts, fruit, toast.

### Plan Tomorrow Tonight

Before bed, write down the three things you will study tomorrow. Waking up with a plan removes the "what should I do?" paralysis that wastes your best morning energy.

### Celebrate Small Wins

Finished a study session? Tick it off. Tell someone. Give yourself credit. Your brain learns to associate studying with a sense of achievement, which makes starting easier next time. Progress is progress, even when it feels small.

## YOUR CHEAT SHEET — PICK ONE TO TRY TODAY

- ✓ Close your notes and write what you remember
- ✓ Try one 25-minute Pomodoro session
- ✓ Put your phone face down before you start
- ✓ Make five flashcards on your weakest topic
- ✓ Study for just two minutes — see what happens
- ✓ Drink a glass of water before you begin

*You do not need to do all of these. You just need to start.*

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