In this Guide...

- Study spirals
- Staying motivated
- Identifying your learning style(s)
- Organising yourself
- Keeping concentration
- Using your memory
- Effective note taking
- Preparing for exams
- Avoiding procrastination
Have you ever been caught in the study spiral?
Adapted by Nepean Library Staff from a presentation by the WSI Counselling & Careers Service (Blacktown and Nirimba) 2013

- Not organised
  - Poor environment
  - No interest
  - Hard subject
  - Bored

- Study not working

- Low self esteem

- Faced with making a decision
  - Try to catch up - set unrealistic goals

- Work not finished

- Not enough study

- Poor assignment and exam marks

- Anxiety becoming overpowering

- Study even less. Block anxiety by saying there's no problem

- Feel more guilty and anxious about falling behind

- Get worried, Angry with self

- Do not complete goals

- Worry more. Do less - fail

- Feel more guilty and anxious about falling behind

- 1. Leave

- 2. Go back around spiral

- 3. Change method
How to avoid the spiral?

- Staying motivated
- Identifying your learning style(s)
- Organising yourself
- Keeping concentration
- Using your memory
- Effective note taking
- Preparing for exams
- Avoiding procrastination
Ask your self: "Why am I studying my course?"

• What’s in it for me?

• What do I want to get out of it?

• What are my goals?
  ○ Now & Later
Your goals might include:

**NOW**
- Improve Job Prospects
- Interest
- Improve myself
- Learn new skills

**LATER**
- Develop Confidence
- Personal satisfaction
- Recognition from others
- Job Opportunities
- Promotion

Keep in mind your reasons for studying. They are important to **you**.
What type of learner are you?

We all have different learning styles.

Working out your learning style can help you study more effectively.

Use the check lists on the following pages to work out your style. Some people are a mix of two styles.
Visual

- See for understanding
- Prefer to watch TV/read
- Don’t like untidiness
- Like to see things like photos/plans
- Spell by seeing (visualising)
- Forget names but remember faces
- See vivid pictures when visualising
- Become silent when angry
- Like to talk to people face to face
- Pick moods by watching face

Total from 10
Auditory

- Think in sounds
- Get attracted to/distracted by sounds
- Enjoy listening to/playing music
- Like to ‘hear’ conversation when reading
- Spell by sounding the word
- Enjoy listening but are impatient to talk
- Forget faces but remember names
- Talk to self when inactive
- Have an outburst when angry
- Like to talk on the phone

total from 10
Kinaesthetic

- Like to learn through movement
- Get attracted by movement
- Prefer to play games/sport
- Like dancing
- Remember best what have done
- Like comfort or movement
- Reward others with pats on the back
- Not keen reader but prefer action stories
- Like spelling to ‘feel’ right
- Experience feelings when remembering

Total out of 10
Managing your time effectively will help you get things done. It will also reduce stress and help you find balance.

The following pages include some time management strategies.
1. Have a semester plan

Use a semester plan to show what you need to do week by week across the whole semester. Remember to include:

- Due dates of assignments
- Weekly progress goals
- A study plan to review your class work
2. Have a weekly time plan

Write up a new timetable each week considering your priorities & commitments. Allocate specific time for:

- Classes
- Work
- Travel
- Home Duties
- Study- Check with your Semester Plan
- Relaxation or exercise
- Social & cultural involvements
3. Make a “to do” list

- Draw up daily job list or study session list of things ‘to do’
- List every task- then break them into small chunks
- Rank each task in order of importance:
  1’s urgent - need immediate attention
  2’s intermediate attention- important but not urgent
  3’s can possibly wait till tomorrow
- Cross out or tick every job as you achieve it – this gives a sense of achievement

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If you’re struggling to get organised...

• Use a time log - monitor your time and record how much you spend on every activity each week.

• Check what you can reduce or get rid of.

• Refer to your timetable daily to check your priorities.
Concentration tips

If you struggle to concentrate on your studies try following these tips:

• Work in a suitable environment- make sure you’re comfortable and have everything you need before you start studying

• Write your ‘to do’ list

• Start with a task you like…this will help you focus
Concentration tips

• Study in short bursts with lots of breaks…then build up to longer periods

• Try to recall material learnt…check and recheck your learning

• Be an active learner - take notes in class, underline, highlight, review, ask questions, make comments.
Peaks & Troughs

Accept that you will have peaks and troughs while studying

Get your workload down to manageable chunks

Concentrate on what you can do
Improving your Memory

• Remembering is an activity. You can train yourself to remember more!

• Watch your diet, stress & health…all these things can affect memory

• Check any medication with your doctor for side effects

• Rest and relax at the end of each study session, each week and each semester.

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Improving your Memory

• Put ideas in your own words- your understanding is important

• Develop an overview of what you are learning……. then learn the details

• Make connections - link ideas

• Many short study sessions with breaks are better than one long unbroken session
Improving your Memory

• If you’re an Auditory learner tape record your notes and summaries – play them back

• Use mnemonics (memory aids)

• If you’re a visual learner use visual aids, maps, sketches and diagrams to help you learn concepts

• Use learn-by-heart repetition- read, make notes, then test yourself to see what you can recall
Mind Maps

• You can use Mind maps to help you understand and remember

• Mind maps are great because they appeal to all styles of learning!
To make a Mind Map...

• Put the topic in the centre of the page
• Add a branch for each sub-topic
• Add details to branches

• Use pictures and symbols
• Use at least 3 colours
• Use UPPER and lower case letters
• Use pens of various thickness
• Vary word size to show importance
• Use arrows to show relationships
• Put your own style, creativity, zest and action into your mind map
Example:

MINERALS

Metals
  - Rare
  - alloys
  - gemstones
  - masonry stone
  - Silver
  - gold
  - steel
  - brass

Stones
  - diamond
  - ruby
  - granite
  - marble
Effective Note Taking

Effective note taking is an important skill to develop.

Good notes help you remember what you’ve covered in class. They can also be helpful if you need to revise for an exam.
Effective Note Taking

To take effective notes:

• Pre read texts before class
• Listen carefully
• Be organised – include margins, the date, the subject, the topic and the teacher
• Ask questions in class and make a note of the answers
Effective Note Taking

- Use point form or mind maps
- Use abbreviations to save space and time
- Highlight, underline, diagram – make important things stand out
- Use headings and subheadings
- Use separate folders for each subject and each assignment
What notes to include?

Sometimes it can be hard to know what to include when taking notes. We recommend you note down:

• The date, subject, topic, teacher, page number
• Teacher’s outline, introduction & conclusion
• Definitions
• Dates, figures, formulae, facts, statistics
• Diagrams
• Examples

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What notes to include?

- Information your teacher puts on the board
- Key words and phrases
- Your own ideas and questions – highlighted separately
- References
- Your teacher’s personal view
- Things you may want to ask your teacher
Helpful abbreviations

- **- ve**  Negative
+ **ve**  Positive
- **△**  Change
- **∵**  because
- **∴**  therefore
- **↑**  increase/rise
- **↓**  decrease/falls
- **→**  leads to, results in
- **←**  decrease falls
<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/o</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>govt</td>
<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
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<td>s/o</td>
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<tr>
<td>s/t</td>
<td>Something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>Less than</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Helpful abbreviations

- >  Greater than
- C’tee  Committee
- @  at
- #  number
- Ψ  psychology
- Sum.  Summary
- Mgt  management
- ie  that is
- adv.  advantage
Summarising

Once you get home spend some time reading and summarising your notes. This will help you remember what you’ve learnt.

When summarising:

• Make sure you cover all the main concepts
• Aim for one line phrases
• Look at 1 page at a time and decide what’s important
• Use diagrams and prioritise important points
• Keep your summary portable so you can take it with you and study on the go!
Exam preparation
Many students find exams stressful, so we recommend you start preparing early, 5 – 6 weeks before your exams.

During this time you should:
• Increase study time
• Draw up a separate study timetable
  • Allow time for each subject and topic
  • Allow extra time for subjects you find difficult
Exam Preparation

• Organise your notes
  • Summarise
  • Highlight
  • Diagram

• Practise past exam papers

• Mentally prepare for success, practise relaxation techniques

• Take care of yourself. Make sure you eat, sleep and exercise

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When studying for exams...

- Read a section of a topic
- Summarise or mind map
- Cover your summary and rewrite or remap
- When you know the information, move on to next section and do the same
- Continue until you’ve covered the whole topic
- Then go over the whole topic and rewrite or remap it all
- Practise this several times
Procrastination
Why do we procrastinate?

There are lots of reasons people procrastinate. They include:

• Not knowing where to start
• Imagining the task is much bigger than it actually is
• Feeling overwhelmed
• Thinking if you can’t do something perfectly you shouldn’t do it at all
• Difficulty concentrating
Stop procrastinating

If you need to stop procrastinating and start working, try the following:

• Stop feeling bad…just acknowledge your avoidance
• Prepare yourself…imagine yourself finishing
• Break the task into very small steps, do them one at a time and tick them off a list as you go
• Work with other people – sometimes this can be a motivator
• Promise yourself a reward when you finish
For More Information

• Visit the Student Success Learning Centre at Nepean College Library

• Contact the Counselling & Careers Service
  http://wsi.tafensw.edu.au/students/support-services/counselling-and-careers/