

Don't get trapped! 9 self-doubts that hinder studying

Listed below are nine "traps" or thoughts that end up hurting our learning and study habits. Read each thought and the strategies you can use to overcome them.



Trap #1 - "I don't know where to begin!" Take control by making a list of all the things you have to do. Then break them down into manageable chunks by prioritizing what is most important. Having a tangible list of 'to-do' items can help to give structure and clarity to your workload

Trap #2 - "I have so much to study and so little time!" Preview by surveying your textbook, syllabus and notes. By identifying the most important topics and areas to be covered, you can reduce the amount of time spent on unimportant items and activities.

Trap #3 - "This stuff is so boring, I can't even stay awake reading it." Get involved with the text through active reading. Take notes and highlight important information. You can also discuss the material with others in your class by studying together!

Trap #4 - "I read it, I understand it, I just can't remember it!" We remember best the things that are most meaningful to us. As you read, try to elaborate on the text by adding your own examples or those from lecture. Integrating what you already know with new material makes recall easier.

Trap #5 - "There is just too much to remember." It is easier to remember information if it is in an organized framework making retrieval more systematic. To do this, you can create chapter outlines, summaries and study guides, or even charts to help get organized.

Trap #6 - "I knew it a minute ago." Review as you read. After completing a section, ask yourself questions on what you read and then re-read portions you don't remember. Reviewing lecture and text notes weekly can help immensely - you cannot over-study!

Trap #7 - "... But I like to study in bed!" Your recall abilities are better when where you study is like the testing context (meaning physical location, as well as mental, emotional, and physical state). The greater the similarity between your study setting and the exam, the greater your recall.

Trap #8 - "Cramming before a test keeps it fresh in my mind." Spacing out your studying gives you a better chance of remembering exam information. Repeated review creates stronger connections in your brain than cramming would, thus helping you to remember!

Trap #9 - "I'm going to stay up all night 'til I get this!" That can lead to mental exhaustion! Take short breaks when studying and have a rested mind before an exam. Lack of sleep plus stress causes your body to produce a chemical that blocks information retrieval.

Additional Study Tips for success:

- Change your surroundings
- Develop a daily routine
- Study with friends
- Create a studying space
- Review materials before class

Studying 101: Study Smarter Not Harder by UNC Learning Center

<https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/studying-101-study-smarter-not-harder/>