

You Get Out What You Put In

Putting off tasks is often a way of temporarily reducing stress. Unfortunately, this approach only delays and concentrates stress. When you begin a task you leave behind all the worry and anticipation that it is “so big” or “so difficult”. Choose some small aspect of the task and get going right away.

Keep The Company of Successful Peers

You can gain a lot in the way of motivation just by spending time with successful people. Challenge each other, teach each other, learn from each other. Develop study groups and quiz each other before tests and exams. Talk about your strategies and about your goals. Share your fears and work together to overcome them.

Rethink Your Approach to Exams

Sure exams can be stressful and scary, but they are really meant as an opportunity to provide you feedback about the quality of your learning. Instead of waiting until the last minute to study and then waiting until the grade comes back to see how well you’ve done, set up your study routine to give yourself lots of time to prepare and test yourself prior to the exam. Not only will you develop a sense of confidence that will carry over to the exam, you will have a chance to catch any errors or omissions before you enter the exam room. Suddenly, the exam won’t seem so scary.

For further information

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Learning Skills Program

**TEN SECRETS OF UNIVERSITY
SUCCESS**

A focus On Success

Success is all about doing the best you can with what you have. Success is perseverance in the face of challenge; it means rising to the occasion; it means pulling through when times are tough. A positive attitude is a key ingredient in succeeding at university. Taking responsibility for making things happen, following through on tasks, and staying oriented towards your goals will all contribute to success.

Staying On Top Of It All

Managing time is absolutely critical. Know what your goals are. Figure out where your time is going and develop supportive routines. Use a planner, set your own deadlines, and look ahead to see what tasks are due in the near future. Learn to balance your school, work, and personal commitments. Procrastinate less.

Read The Course Outlines

Once you see the course from the perspective of the professor, you'll have a major insight into what (and how) to study for your courses. Seeing the course from this perspective is as easy as carefully analyzing the course outline and course description for the goals, objectives, and topics of the course. Equipped with the knowledge of what is important in the course, you can organize your approach to the course to focus on the main ideas of the course and their inter-connections.

Listen Actively In Class

Taking notes from a lecture is a thinking activity. Effective listening involves paying attention, developing an interest for listening to the lecture, and avoiding premature judgment of the speaker. Pay particular attention to the beginnings and endings of the lecture to gain a better sense of its outline and main points, then summarize and anticipate the direction of the lecture. Evaluate the ideas you hear, select important information to record, and ask questions about what you hear. Avoid the passive listener approach of trying to "get it all"; instead, listen for main ideas, key details, and transitional phrases which point to the structure and focus of the lecture.

Read With Your Brain Switched On

If you've ever found yourself moving your eyes over the words of the text but found your thoughts were off somewhere else, you'll know how much time re-reading long passages of text consumes. Reading more actively (that is, thoughtfully) can make reading more effective and efficient. Read with the aim of understanding and relating the ideas of the text to your existing knowledge, previous readings, lecture material, and the goals of the course. As you read along, summarize main ideas, interpret the themes of the reading, think critically, and try to state the material in your own words. It isn't necessary to memorize everything written in the text. Instead, focus on reading selectively, extracting information that is relevant to your course and your purpose as a reader.

Don't Get Stressed Out

Your first line of defense against stress may be to reduce your symptoms of stress. Taking a walk, doing yoga, meditating, and "venting" about your stress are common examples of symptom reduction strategies. They are geared to relieve the more common symptoms of stress. Once your symptoms are relieved a little, you'll be ready to identify the source of stress (if it isn't already apparent to you). Time pressures, making the adjustment to university life, finances, leaving home, living independently, relationships, and balancing work, school and a personal life may all contribute to your stress. Knowing where your stress comes from can help you to concentrate your stress management where it will matter most. Taking time out to deal with your stressors head-on can make a big difference in your day to day experience of stress.

Keep Your Focus On Improvement!

While each course or assignment might be unique, the skills needed to perform well on them carry over from one to the next. It might seem obvious, but a key element of success is actually paying attention to and working on the feedback you receive. Grades, comments, contradictory information, stress, delight... these are all forms of feedback that can help you to improve. Instead of working harder doing the same things, change your approach gradually on the basis of the feedback that you receive.