

Study Tips for Non-Traditional Students

1. **Study in “chunks” of time.** Most of us can only focus for 20-30 minutes at a time before our minds start to wander. Set a timer for 25 minutes, FOCUS and study, and then take a five-minute break. Repeat as necessary.
2. **Designate a study space.** Ideally, this should be a quiet place free of distractions and clutter. Whether it's at your school's library or in your kitchen after you put the kids to bed at night, designating a space to study helps your brain get into the studying mood faster.
3. **Form a study group.** Seek out other non-traditional students if you're more comfortable with them, and form a study group that works around your schedule. Even if you're taking online classes, find a few classmates to form an accountability group.
4. **Make the material mean something.** Don't try to memorize rote facts... it's so difficult! Turn your notes into a story that you can easily re-tell to someone else.
5. **Rewrite your notes in your own words.** It's tempting to just copy your professor's PowerPoint slides, but you'll remember your notes much better if they're written in the way you'd actually say them.
6. **Read your textbook out loud.** When you're having a hard time concentrating, this tip can force you to focus on the text you're reviewing. Sometimes it takes reading *and* hearing the information to comprehend it.
7. **Create outlines and graphics based on your notes.** When exam time comes around, you don't want to read through 50 pages of notes to get to the good stuff. Condense your notes into an outline or graphic form to increase your comprehension and maximize your study time.
8. **Prioritize your study time.** Trying to decide what to study and when is a struggle for some students. Organize the assignments and exams in *all* your classes according to date, and you'll see at a glance which subject or course you need to focus on.
9. **Do one thing at a time.** For your more difficult subjects, do not try to multi-task while studying. It takes longer to do everything than it would to simply focus on one task at a time. Put your cell phone or computer away, leave the cleaning for another time, and just focus.
10. **Remember why you started.** Whether you've gone back to school for personal enrichment or you're working toward another degree to get a promotion, change careers or to enter the workforce, remember why you started to begin with. This can help you stay motivated when the studying gets tough... and it *will* get tough sometimes.