SUPPORTING YOUR STUDIES
-GUIDE

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How does this guide work?

This guide contains tips to support your studies. It helps you to identify the best ways to learn, this way studying will also go smoother. You can approach the guide in many different ways: by reading through the entire guide, focusing on a specific theme, or adopting a single method. Remember that coping and stress management also affect your academic performance. With the help of the guide, you can find the tips to promote your studies.

Topics:
- Time management
- Concentration
- Study techniques
- Avoiding procrastination
TIME MANAGEMENT
1. **List the things you spend your time on weekly.** Consider all areas of life:
   - Studying - List everything you need to do, such as essays, exams, etc.
   - Hobbies
   - Relationships (e.g. time for friends etc.)
   - Homework
   - Eating
   - Rest, recovery
   - Jobs
   - And so on

2. **Sort the tasks into three baskets (ABC)**
   **A:** The most important tasks in terms of results and goals.
   - For example: essential courses, a really important work project, an important match coming up on your hobbies etc.
   - Tip: 4 to 6 most important things
   **B:** Routines, daily chores and less important activities.
   - For example: paying less attention to optional course, going to grocery store.
   **C:** Minor things - do you need do those at all?
   - Things you do only if you have time, and which do not ruin your plans even if they are left undone right now.
3. Attention to the A-basket

Turn your attention on the A-basket. Pick all the tasks related to your studies (courses, etc.). List what needs to be done before the course starts (preparation, etc.), during the course and at the end of the course. One course at a time. Break down your goals into weekly tasks by asking yourself "what do I need to do to achieve that goal?"

Examples:
- To get the math course done, weekly tasks include going to lectures, getting materials, solving problems, attending to workshops, asking for advice, gaining more information from other sources, revising.
- In the case of a 5-credit course, the weekly workload on a six-period course is quite high. A total of 135 hours are required to complete the course. This divided into six weeks means more than 20 hours per week.
- Break down your tasks into small parts that you are sure to get done. This ensures that you get the feeling of success. Then focus your attention on the next week. What do you need to do then?
1. Draw on piece of paper a timeline of months until the next teaching period.
2. For each month, mark in different colors all the courses you have during the period.
3. Add to the timeline the deadlines of each course (e.g. group work submission date, essay return date, exams).
   -> This will give you a clear idea of what courses and related assignments you are currently taking.
   -> After creating a timeline, you can easily make a weekly schedule for your calendar.
My timeline:
You can have a calendar in either paper or electronic format. Write down in the calendar tasks that you must not slip from, like:

- Lectures
- Meals
- Activities, seminar work, master’s thesis, etc.
- Exercises
- Important personal activities, such as hobbies and other social events

Don’t make too constricted plans; instead, make a loose daily program after a tight day. Get to know yourself: are you a morning bird or a night owl? It’s a good idea to leave the most difficult and hard work for this effective (prime) time. Think also if you enjoy the same daily routines, or do you need regular change? The calendar should feel and look right for you, so customize it to suit your needs.
## WEEKLY CALENDAR

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Write down the tasks and things that take up your time in the jar on the next page. Classify them into large and small stones according to the weight they have on you. The task will help you prioritize things: What should I focus on first? Which can I do later? This page is an example of what a jar of life can look like.

If you wish, you can then fill in another jar called a "dream jar". It's a jar meant for you to write how you would like your time to look like. Which stones would be bigger and which would be smaller? Should some stone go away completely?
Jar right now:

Dream jar:
Reminders

You can use different reminders to help you stay on schedule. These can be alarms on the phone or sticky notes. For example, it is easier to leave home on time when you set a clock or phone to alert you 15 minutes before departure time.
TIPS FOR FOCUSING
If you find yourself “stuck” in a particular task for too long, specify the time to spend on the task instead of the end result. So plan ahead how long you will do the task. Even set an alarm on your phone to remind you to stop doing it at that time. For example, limit the time available to one hour, instead of doing endless research on all the material you find.

ONE THING AT TIME

It may be that you jump from one thing to another, making it difficult or causing you to forget to return to the original task. In that case, you should always complete one thing at a time - or consciously and as planned, vary from task to task. By dividing your work into smaller pieces, it’s easier for you to focus throughout the task. For example, you can plan your work so that you take a short break every 15-25 minutes. You can also use the watch to test how long you can continuously perform a boring or unpleasant task, and break your work into lengths and/or slightly longer sections. For some, it is also suitable to take turns between two or three different tasks every 15-30 minutes, which makes things more interesting. Here, however, it is important to plan in advance what you will do and in what order.
Observe yourself as you work. When you find your thoughts wandering, ask yourself, “What was I doing?” Monitoring yourself can be difficult at first, but you can practice it by setting an alarm for yourself every 10 minutes, for example. When you hear the alarm, ask yourself:

1) what you are doing
2) what you just did and
3) what you should do now and what to do next

You can also write down distractions while you work. For example, if you’re filling out a form and a good idea pops up in your mind as a friend’s birthday present, write it down. Once things are in paper, you can continue to focus on the form and return to the gift idea later when the work is done.

Source: ADHD:n psykologinen hoito-ohjelma aikuisille.
Maarit Virta, Anita Salakari ja Hogrefe Psykologien Kustannus Oy.
Think what kind of environment is easiest for you to focus on. Some are helped by background sounds like music, while others focus best in silence. Some also find it easier to concentrate when they speak things out loud. Speaking out of loud directs thoughts to stay in the right thing, and speaking activates the brain through both movement and senses. Moving around during an exercise can make it easier to concentrate, for example, you can walk or spin a stress ball in your hands. In the lecture, think about where you can best focus on the class room.
You may find yourself constantly late or have trouble remembering where you left your belongings. Next time, for example, when you leave home, turn on the timer and see how long it takes you to complete your morning activities. Also, pay attention to where your time is going. Looking for lost keys? Are you staying on the phone? Is it difficult to choose suitable clothes? This will give you a realistic idea of how much time it actually takes to do things and which things will take your time. Next time, you can set aside more realistic time to do the things and also anticipate situations. Can you put the key in a certain same place every time, for example in a basket with a hat rack? Or if you forget your wallet at home, put a reminder on the front door. Maybe you can choose the clothes you put on the night before and pre-load the coffee maker?
The more stuff there is, the easier it is to mess up. If you have too much stuff in your home, you might want to consider what you really need and what you don’t. Also, get a trash can for each room to make it as easy as possible to throw away unnecessary items.

A huge number of different tools have been developed for managing goods: storage boxes, drawers, plastic pockets, folders... Think about what kind of tools could be useful for you. For example, would you benefit from transparent storage boxes that make it easy to see what they hold?
STUDY TECHNIQUES
You can improve your concentration by writing down important things for yourself. This is a good way, as writing is a motor activity that provides stimulation to the brain and maintains the level of activation. Writing things in your own words also “forces” you to focus, as it requires listening and understanding. In the longer term, writing also has other benefits, it reinforces the memorization of things, and you can also check things out from the notes you make afterwards. If you wish, you can also make a concept map during lectures, for example, if it helps you to understand things better.
HOW TO MIND MAP

- CENTRAL IMAGE
- USE COLOUR
- EQUIPMENT
- WHY?
- SEPARATES OUT THE IDEAS
- HIGHLIGHT SIMILAR IDEAS
- MORE INTERESTING

- TURN THE SHEET LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION
- USE PAPER
- DRAW PICTURES
- CURVE YOUR BRANCHES
- WHY?
- STRAIGHT LINES ARE BORING
- MORE INTERESTING FOR YOUR BRAIN

- LINED PAPER
- AVOID SMALL SHEETS
- DOESN'T NEED TO BE A WORK OF ART
- DON'T THINK OF A MONKEY
- WE THINK IN PICTURES (NOT WORDS)
- THICK LINES TO THIN LINES

- COMPUTER VERSUS HAND DRAWN
- PAPERS VS.
- COMPUTER
- DOWNSIDES
- MAY RESTRICT YOU
- WHY CAN'T I ADD A BRANCH?

- SIMPLE
- COLOURFUL
- FUN

- EASIER TO FOLLOW AND ALLOWS MORE FREEDOM
- PAPER BENEFITS
- SLOWS DOWN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- A4 OR A3
- 1000 WORDS
- Write a to-do list for tomorrow
- The smaller a single task, the lower the threshold is to start doing it
- If you could do just one thing today, what would it be so that you can consider this day a success?
Daily to do list:

1.

2.

3.
Active reading strategies can significantly increase learning new information. Actively and critically engaging with the content can save you time. It is convenient, for example, for mastering extensive exam materials.

Source: Active reading (SQ3R - 5 steps strategy). Metodes.Lv.
THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE®
A SIMPLE METHOD TO BALANCE FOCUS WITH DELIBERATE BREAKS

1. PLAN YOUR TASKS
   How many pomodoros might you need?

2. DO 1 POMODORO
   Time for 25 mins then take a 5 min break

3. REPEAT x 4 POMODOROS
   Then take a longer break

CONCEIVED BY FRANCESCO CIRILLO
sketchplanations
POMODORO TECHNIQUES

Try example:
- Tomato Timer
- My tomatoes
- Forest
- Brain focus
- Study bunny
- Timer timer
- Classroom timers
Craft memory cards that you write on the other side of, for example the name of the concept and its explanation on the other side. The effect of memory cards is that you can easily find out what you know and what you don't. It helps to print and recall things that are actively being studied. You can also use electronic memory cards such as Quizlet or Anki.
- Imagine something to remember in a context. For example, whenever you go out the door, check to see if you have “four hard ones” with you: keys, credit card, bus card, and phone.
- A surprising object in a surprising place also acts as a wake-up call. For example, if you need to remember to take an extra shopping bag with you when you go out, put an orange on the bed as a reminder.
- Make up a sign in connection with a new name, for example “Benjamin, the bee”. Feel free to use your imagination. The funnier and wilder you develop, the more certain you will remember.
- Imagine sprinkling things to remember on some familiar route. For example on the route from the bus stop to home you can place things to remember in different places. This works especially for memorizing different lists. As you follow the route in your mind, things will also appear in your mind.

Source: Opas sujuvampaan opiskeluun, Kuntoutussäätiö
Avoiding procrastination
WHY WE PROCRASTINATE?

Do you find it difficult to start things? Do you avoid doing an unpleasant task? The reason for the postponement is often the so-called autopilot control. Because of that we act instinctively in unpleasant situations and can’t think clearly. An unpleasant situation causes unpleasant feelings and thoughts (such as anxiety and insecurity). We automatically interpret the situation as threatening, in which case we want to avoid or escape the situation. Think about it: What situation postponement usually occurs? What do you usually do then? What thoughts, feelings, and bodily reactions are involved? And what could make you feel better?
Consider a situation where you are delaying starting a task. Then write what happens in the situation:

**Situation:**
For example: I should read for the exam

**Thoughts:**
For example: "I can't do this", "It's useless to even try", "Others are much better"

**Feelings:**
For example: Anxiety, tiresomeness, irritability

**Activities:**
For example: Instead of studying, I watch TV

Then consider what you could do differently. What would help you get started?

For example: I work half an hour and then watch a movie, go out first then start, write down things to do, choose a playlist to listen to while studying.
Recognizing your own thoughts is important. You don’t have to take your own thoughts for granted, you can learn to look at them a little further. Often when we delay things, we automatically follow our own thoughts without stopping to think about it, "Do I really want to do this?". Write down on the next page what your negative/critical thoughts are and which thoughts could encourage and calm you down.
Negative thoughts:

Calming thoughts:
Take two stacks of post-it notes. Write the word “when...” on one of the stacks and the word “so” on the other. Then think about the typical obstacles when starting a study assignment. Write these obstacles on the "when" post-it notes. For example:
When I want to start cleaning...
When I want to watch Netflix ...
When I want to watch cat videos ...
Then innovate different solution options for each "when" tag and write them on the "so..." post-it notes. For example:
... So I put the thing up on the to-do list and go back to the study task
... So I look through my learning goals and start with the easiest task.
... So I put on a timer and do a 5-minute study assignment.
Finally, put the post-it notes close to your computer so they are there when you need them. The post-it notes can help stop the automatic reaction (the decision to postpone is often quick and automatic). When you make up your mind to postpone, look at the notes and their solutions, and make an AWARE choice about how you decide to act instead of an automatic reaction.
Set workable goals

Set yourself well-defined goals using the SMART formula on the next page. For example, “finishing all the work” is not a well-defined goal. A workable goal is one that you know for sure when you have achieved it. Also, set yourself a time limit for doing things. Instead of thinking you’re doing it “one day,” you might want to think that “I’ll start it today at 12 p.m.” or “I’ll do it by 8 a.m.” The goals should be realistic, so don’t set goals that you know are impossible to achieve in the desired way in time. When you reach the clear goal you set within the time limit, you will also have the experience of success, which will help you to continue to be motivated.
Make workable and realistic goals by using the SMART method.

You can increase your commitment to your goal by making it visible. Write your goals on a bulletin board or wall calendar. Tell your acquaintances, friends or colleagues about it. When something is said out loud to other people, the need to achieve a goal often grows.
Choose one of your goals and format it according to the SMARTEST framework.

Specific: What concrete thing do you achieve in the time used (e.g. 1-2 hours)?

Measurable: What is a good enough outcome?

Achievable: What can you realistically achieve in the current situation?

Reflection: How do you make progress visible and evaluate performance?

Time bound: When should something be done, and what are the milestones?

Enthusiastic and ambitious: What makes a goal ambitious and motivating?

Significant: What makes a goal important and relevant?

Transparent: How do you make the goal transparent and share it with others?
Motivators = factors that make a task seem more interesting to you. So think about what tasks are usually of interest to you and in what situations you manage to get things done. This can lead you to sources of motivators. For example, an otherwise boring task (like studying for an exam) can become tolerable or even comfortable when you do it together with the people you like. Energizing yourself with music, for example, can also help you do things.

Imagine in your mind what success will look and feel like. Create the most vivid picture of success possible and learn to recall it whenever you are stepping down the path to achieving your goal. Also pay attention to what tone of voice you are talking to yourself. Instead of commanding and blaming yourself, make your inner voice “softer,” which “entices” you to do tasks and reminds you of what all pleasant and comfortable things you can achieve when you get the thing done. Also, be sure to reward yourself for a successful performing. The rewards don’t have to be big, but they often help a lot. If you want, you can draw / paint / write on the next page what success feels like, what it looks like, where you notice it...
This is how achieving my goals feels:
WHERE AM I?

Write in the boxes on the next page ...

PAST
In the box on the left, write the events and experiences of the past that still affect your life.

FUTURE
Write future plans, dreams or wishes in the right box.

PRESENT
In the middle, write the things you want to confirm right now.
Thank you!
everyday is a FRESH START
Sources

Active reading (SQ3R - 5 steps strategy), Metodes.Lv.


Learning fundamentals. Mind map.


Pictures: Pexels & Pixabay

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Space for your own notes