

TOP 5 MOST EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES

1. Spacing it out

Spread out your study sessions throughout the week by **studying smaller amounts** over several study sessions or days. This is called **spaced practice** and it is much more effective because memories fade quickly after studying. When you space out your studying, you retain more information and strengthen your memories. It also lets you revisit material you might have forgotten and gives that information a boost in your memory. Focus on learning a little bit of material at a time in **30 to 60-minute study sessions**. Even if you spend the same number of hours studying, spacing out your learning improves your understanding and will be a lot less stressful!

2. Testing yourself

Testing yourself is an effective strategy because the process of trying to remember material strengthens your memory. You want to **actively recall information** instead of simply becoming familiar with it through passive activities like rereading your notes or textbook. Testing yourself engages your brain more and leads to **better understanding of the material long-term**. It also helps you identify any gaps in your understanding so you can go back and review it or ask questions during office hours. Here are a few different ways to test yourself:

- Use flashcards/Quizlet
- Create your own study guides and practice tests, or create practice problems and new examples
- Make flow-charts or other visual representations of the material
- Brain-dump: take a blank document and write out everything you know about the topic

To take full advantage of the benefits, make sure you **respond on your own before looking up the answers!** Wait to flip that flashcard over and force yourself to describe the concept! Cover your notes and try to remember everything on the page! Solve the chapter review questions before looking at the answers! This will feel more difficult, but you will have a better understanding of the material and be less likely to forget it.

3. Explaining the material

Explaining the material in your own words helps you understand the information at a deeper level and apply it in different ways. This is exactly what you need to do when taking an exam or completing an assignment!

Summarize your notes in your own words, take a concept and re-write it in your own way. Describe and teach the information to a friend, classmate, or even your pet! As long as you are **explaining the material (out loud or in your head) without looking at your notes**, you will understand the information better and be able to remember it for longer.

4. Elaborating on concepts

Elaboration is a strategy where you **build connections** among the material and **make the content meaningful to you**. Try to explore the relationship between ideas, write out how things work together and why they work together. Explain and describe the concepts with as many details as you can. Explore similarities and differences between the content and other information you've learned. Think of ways this new material could connect and apply to your own experiences and previous knowledge.

5. Interleaving content

Interleaving is a technique where you **mix materials or topics within a study session**. By studying the same content or problem type over and over, you run the risk of overestimating your ability to recall that material. To avoid this, **shuffle your flashcards** and make sure all the chapters/content are randomly mixed. Solve problems at **random** so you cannot automatically anticipate what you will need to do to solve it. This will help you identify both the type of problem and the correct way to apply it, which is what you will be asked to do during exams.