
Making learning stick

With the Writing Development Centre

Whether you're absorbing lecture notes or revising for an exam, try these strategies to make your learning go in.

Many students rely on passive learning techniques—re-reading, underlining, reciting - to help them learn. These tips, based on research findings, will give you the advantage.

Mix it up: Your surroundings get linked as 'cues' by your memory to the content you're learning. Keep it flexible and fresh by changing your study space frequently.

Test it sooner not later: Use testing as an active way to learn, not just to see if you have learned. Making your memory work for it just after you've studied something will clue your brain in that it's important, strengthen your memory and make it easier to recall next time it's needed.

Space it out: Come back to material you're learning in closely spaced intervals at first, and then after longer gaps, to ensure it's picked up long term. Keep using it or risk losing it!

Take turns: Interleave a study topic with other topics, or even non-study activities, rather than cramming it all at once. A change is as good as a rest, even for your memory!

Work it: Build it into your own understanding by working actively with it—reduce and expand it, turn it into other formats (mindmap, bullet points, paraphrase, diagram) and make connections with other topics.

Apply it: Answering past papers or making up your own mock questions will help you use your new learning, give it purpose and make it more meaningful.

Sleep on it: Give it a rest—while you sleep, your brain will be laying down the new memories!

Want to review your study strategies?

[Book a one to one appointment](#) with us for personalised study advice tailored to you, your subject and level of study.