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How Can I Concentrate Better When I Study?

Terry Teigeler

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A weekly question/answer column

How Can I Concentrate Better When I Study?

Terry Teigeler answers:*

Have a special place that is set aside only for studying. Go to the same place at a regular time. Make sure your study environment is equipped with all the necessary study supplies before you begin.

- Reduce external distractions by taking the phone off the hook, getting away from background noise and telling others to take time out from talking to you. Accept internal responsibility for your study activities. Avoid daydreaming. Put a paper next to you to record distracting ideas that can be taken care of later.
- Take sides on issues you read about to help create interest in what you're studying. Find relationships between old interests and new materials.
- Study small sections at a time to help you master specific ideas rather than trying to master large sections of material in a short time. Take planned, short breaks as a relief and reward. Make long term and short term rewards that are an incentive for accomplishing a specific learning activity.
- Work on the most difficult material when you are the freshest. Eat appropriately and sleep enough so your study time is focused and used most profitably.
- Study with others when possible in small, focused groups.

* Terry Teigeler is Utah State University Extension Director of Ogden Education Center for Graduate Studies