

# 10 New Ways to Study with ADHD

No more late-night cramming. Research shows that these solid study techniques help kids with ADHD learn faster, retain more, and perform better on tests.

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## Less Is More

For students with ADHD, studying for a quiz or test can be daunting, frustrating, and fatiguing. It doesn't have to be that way. Luckily, new research shows that students with attention deficit don't need to spend more time studying; they just need to study differently.

## Shelve the Textbook

Reading is a challenging way for the ADHD brain to learn. It's passive, like learning to play basketball by watching your coach play. The best way to study is to make a practice test. Try to predict what your teacher may ask on the exam: Look over your study guide, pull out old quizzes, find important notes, and ask classmates what they think is important. Then create a practice test.

## Tech Is Your Friend

Since you will be poring over your notes to create a practice test (see previous slide), use these tools to capture what you might have missed during the lecture. Apps like Notability and the Livescribe Smartpen record a lecture while you take notes, synching the audio with the notes. Bonus: Listening to a lecture again is a big help for auditory learners.

## Spread It Out

Don't cram for tests. Studying material in several shorter sessions—45 minutes a day over four days—will give you deeper familiarity with the material. What's more, sleeping on it will help you retain more of it. During sleep, the brain rehashes information you've learned. Reviewing it over several days will increase the odds that you will remember more of the material and better understand it.

## Study in a Coffee Shop

Increase your focus and motivation for studying by seeking out locations outside of your house or room. That way, a laptop, phone, or a pet at home won't take you off task. Some kids study well in Starbucks or another venue that has moderate levels of background noise. Others prefer to hole up in a study carrel in the library, far away from distracting sounds and sights. Experiment and see what works best for you.

## Do a Before-Bed Blitz

Studies show that you remember more when you take 10 to 15 minutes to review material just before you go to sleep. Don't do all of your studying at bedtime, just a quick review so the brain processes the information as you dream away.

## Move More, Learn More

Thirty minutes of aerobic exercise a day, four to five days a week, improves focus and executive functioning skills, especially in students with ADHD. If you are a student athlete, study on the bus or in the car as you travel home from an event. Think about studying right after practice, too. If you don't play a sport, walk your dog, shoot some hoops, or bounce on a trampoline before doing schoolwork.

## Smell Success

Your nose is a powerful study tool. Research shows that if you are exposed to the same smell when you study and sleep, you may remember more. Here's how to do it: When you study, put a small dish of essential oil nearby (peppermint is a good choice because it relieves stress). Place a small dish of the same scent by your bed when you sleep. Research suggests that your brain will associate the scent with the material studied—and you will remember more of the material.

## Give Yourself a Break

Don't plow straight through the test material for hours on end. Research shows that students remember more when they take breaks during study sessions. Having a little downtime enables your brain to review information, even when you don't know your processing it. Set a timer for every 20 minutes to remind you to take a break.

## Take a Power Nap

Experts say that most people need to sleep eight to nine hours a night to remember what they've learned. Teens need even more. Thirty-minute afternoon naps can help. Be sure these siestas don't run longer than 30 minutes, though, since extended shuteye could leave you tossing and turning at bedtime.

## Sweet Rewards

Sugary drinks can improve focus and mood. Gatorade or apple juice provide glucose, which is the primary source of fuel to the brain. If you're low on glucose, you won't be able to focus or perform well. Skip soda and other drinks with high levels of sugar, though. They will provide too much glucose, which will result in a sugar crash later. Always sip—don't gulp—a sugary drink to avoid this rollercoaster ride.

## Want More?

Looking for more school and study tips? *ADDitude* is filled with resources to help your ADHDer make top mark.

11 Tips for High School Success  
12 Homework and Study Shortcuts  
The ADHD Homework System That Works  
The ADHD School Guide  
[Homework Help for ADHDers](#)  
[ADHD Homework Resource Center.html](#)

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