

Studying tips to keep you on top

Erin Carey
Arts & Culture Editor

It's never too early to start preparing for finals.

From my personal experience in Advanced Placement and honors classes in high school and in the classes I now take here at Clackamas Community College, I know a thing or two about what makes good study habits. Everyone has their own tricks to conquer next week's test, but here's a list of ideas that could help you improve your study habits.

There are many people at CCC whose job it is to assist students with studying and productivity. The math, science, and writing labs located in Dye Learning Center are all available for students — young or old — to use when they need them.

There are even classes just to learn how to be a better student. "College Success" (HD-120) is targeted to students who want to gain skills in studying along with many other useful things like personal responsibility and understanding self-management.

1. Study early.

Sometimes, tests sneak up on us. Sometimes, it's 10 p.m. the night before that morning test when you realize that you haven't studied anything. But for most occasions, your best idea is to study early. Your brain doesn't want to study chemistry equations at 10 p.m., so get a start a couple days before, making it a *mid-afternoon* to go over those

equations. After a certain time at night, your brain is getting prepared to sleep, meaning a late night cram session will hardly do you any good. You need your brain awake and ready to absorb information.

2. Be aware of your anxiety.

Often people don't consider their anxiety levels when studying. And while tests are usually cause for anxiety, you don't have to make studying a cause for it too. Find somewhere quiet to study where you won't be distracted and find yourself wasting time. Also, don't try and cram a ton of information into your head at once; your brain can only do so much with what it's given. If you feel yourself start to get anxious, don't try and push through it. Take a break. Go pet your cat, hug your mom or dad, make yourself a sandwich, or take a small walk outside to get some fresh air. The higher your anxiety gets, the easier it is to give up and let that downhill thought process of, "I'm a total failure" start to take over. You aren't a total failure, and you're going to be just fine.

3. Schedule in your breaks.

Time yourself so that you give yourself opportunities for food, water, those basic human necessities. Food is important to keep your brain functioning, so a small snack will help. Don't try and survive on a venti, triple-shot mocha from Starbucks. Try for fruits that have the sugar to boost brain power, which have the natural types of sugars that things like soda don't.

4. Remember breakfast.

Most people don't have time in their mornings for an eggs, bacon and toast type of breakfast, and some don't even like breakfast at all. But all those people telling you that breakfast is good for you have a reason — it is. Eating breakfast keeps your body and brain fueled for the day. But do more than just a bowl of the most sugar-coated cereal you can find. Fruits often pair well in breakfast scenarios, without it having to be a huge ordeal. Taking time to get yourself up and make yourself breakfast will pay off when you're trying to cram for the next big test.

5. Don't fall into the trap of social media.

We've all done it. You have something important to study for that shouldn't take four hours, but it does when you've spent 3/4 of those four hours on Facebook complaining about how you have to study. Close the Facebook tab, the Twitter, the Tumblr, all of it. Put your phone somewhere where a constant stream of texts won't hinder you, and just tell your friends that you have to study, and most likely they'll be more than understanding. It's often difficult to resist the allure of the social media sites, so don't let yourself get distracted.

6. Don't just cram.

If you're studying a Shakespearean sonnet for a class you have to recite it in, your best bet is to shake it up a little. Chop that sonnet into smaller chunks to memorize, then recite them to your cat in such a dramatic fashion that even Shakespeare himself would be proud. Often

things can be divided and conquered, which makes it easier for your brain to digest. Flashcards are a life saver, no matter your level of education. If thinking up rhymes is your thing, do that. Your brain works cohesively with simple tricks to help the memorization process.

7. Find a good place to study.

There are places to avoid when you need to study. These danger zones will prevent you from getting anything done, and it's best to just avoid them entirely. Loud, crowded places distract your focus from the book in front of you, which will leave you staring blankly at your study material. Your bed is another danger zone. Your brain will associate somewhere like your bed or your couch with relaxation time, not a time to be alert and absorbing information. A dining room table often gives you tons of room to spread out your work, and it's not so comfortable you'll end up falling asleep. Places like a library are nice and quiet, and have tons more information in case you get stuck. Even places like coffee shops can be annoyingly loud and distracting, so sadly those are pretty useless too. CCC has many great places to study, like DeJardin where it's often a quiet space for students.

8. Study in partners.

If you find yourself struggling to understand the concepts of what you should be studying, a partner or two can often help. Everyone sees and understands things differently, so they may be able to offer a different solution. Never be afraid to speak up in

class to arrange a study group; often there are students who want the same assistance. Be careful when the groups get too big; people can often get distracted and drag you in, too. Keep it down to a minimum of two or three per group. That way it won't get out of hand.

9. Think positively.

Don't drag yourself down in negativity when it comes to studying. This will often cause a far bigger roadblock for your brain than anything else will. Everyone has his or her challenges, whether it's English, math, or science. But the less positively you think, the more momentum you're losing. Putting yourself in the right frame of mind and keeping yourself there will help you tremendously in the long run.

10. Be prepared.

Even if your science textbook weighs 50 pounds, it's still important and still worth studying out of. Bring a sharpened pencil, sticky notes in bright, eye-catching colors, and plenty of paper to scribble your notes all over. Flash cards, highlighters, the whole thing. And while you might not need all of it every time, they're useful to have when you do.

As students, braving the wilderness of studying, especially when midterms have just passed and finals are slowly creeping in, is messy and disillusioning. But keeping yourself prepared with a few helpful tips and tricks will help to conquer the process and make that test seem just a bit less terrifying.

Bro's Kitchen: Awesome French Sandwich



Chris Browarski
The Clackamas
Print

Chances are, as a college student, you probably suck at making food. I can't blame you either. Cooking is intimidating. It's pretty easy to get caught up with Facebook for a minute and then boom, you're eating burnt flapjacks. Bummer.

That's all right though because here at The Clackamas Print we got your back. We're going to set you up with some awesome recipes and try to make it hard for you to screw it all up.

We're kicking it off this week with a budget version of something called Croque Monsieur, or awesome French sandwich, as I like to call it.

Basically we're going to throw some cheese sauce on your Plain Jane ham sandwich and heat that boy up! This recipe makes two sandwiches, so you can save one for later or show off to your girlfriend how awesome you are.

For this recipe you'll need the following ingredients:

- butter (the real deal, no margarine)
- 1 tbsp flour
- 3/4 cup milk (the thick-

er the better, heavy whipping cream works best)

-2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

-8 oz. Monterey Jack cheese (Really you can substitute any white melty cheese here. If you want to do it right and can spare a couple bucks, pick up a wedge of Gruyere and grate about 1 cup worth.)

-4 slices of bread (You can use white bread but a thick French or Italian loaf will be a lot better.)

-Dijon mustard

-6 slices of ham

We'll start off with making a Béchamel, which is fancy French talk for white milky sauce.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and melt 1 tbsp. of butter in a small saucepan on low heat until it gets foamy. Add 1 tbsp. of flour and whisk it quick for about two minutes until it all turns into a smooth brown mush. Now gradually pour in your milk and raise the heat a little. Stir occasionally until the milk thickens just a little bit.

Next, dump the Parmesan cheese along with a small handful of your shredded Monterey Jack (if you're using something nice like Gruyere then only use about 2 tbsp. here).

Stir it until the cheese melts and your sauce is smooth and has a little thickness to it. Take it off the heat, throw some salt and pepper in there for seasoning, and leave that off to the side.

(Pro tip: You can use this base



A Croque Monsieur is a French grilled ham and cheese sandwich. It is often considered a quick snack in French bars and restaurants.

sauce along with whatever kind of cheese you want to make mac and cheese sauce. Just keep adding cheese, if you want to get it extra thick.)

Next up toast your bread. You can do it in a toaster but I would recommend buttering both sides and toasting each slice on a frying pan on low heat. Either way, after your bread is golden brown, spread some Dijon on one side of each piece of bread. Use a lot here. Mustard is good stuff, dude.

On a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, pile the ham on the Dijon side of two of the slices along with a handful of cheese.

Pour on some of the sauce you made earlier and cover with the other two slices of bread, mustard side down.

Sprinkle whatever remaining cheese you have on top of the bread and cover the sandwiches with the rest of the sauce. Try to get a good even coat on the top and edges of the bread so it'll keep it from burning.

Put your sandwiches in the oven for about five minutes and then move it under a lit broiler. Keep an eye on them and take them out as soon as the cheese on top starts to bubble and turn brown.

Bada Boom, you're eating the realest sandwich in the room.

Editor's Note: This is a new occasional column dedicated to getting dudes in the kitchen and being comfortable with cooking and creating meals.