

Efficient Studying

Requires **active**, not passive learning.

- Active learning requires making decisions about the material:
 - “Is this important?”
 - “How is this part organized”,
 - “Where does this fit into the ‘big picture’?”,
 - “What is the exact definition of this term”,
 - “Where have I seen this in an earlier lecture or review?”
- Passive reading of pages of text or “going over” notes (even with a highlighter) and hoping to absorb the information is very inefficient.
- **Practice...Practice...Practice...** Don’t be surprised if you need to hear or review active strategies multiple times

What are the fundamentals of active studying?

- Identifying the important information – answering the eternal question of “what’s important here?”
- Organizing the information – start with the “big picture” to create a framework that facilitates memorization and application of the knowledge.
- Memorizing the information – this requires frequent review to keep it available for use
- Applying the information to more complex situations – old exam questions, clinical applications, etc.

Where Do I begin?

Step 1: Finding the "big picture" by skimming the information
BEFORE lecture

Step 2: Annotating lecture slides to create a complete rough draft of
the material

Step 3: Creating summary charts, lists or concept maps

Step 4: Actively memorizing

Step 5: Practicing application



Step 1:

In search of the BIG PICTURE....before lecture

- The road map. Scan the material to identify the number of major headings and the major subheadings each has, then take just a couple of minutes to memorize those (don't skip this part!).
- The vocabulary. Scan the material again to note any definitions or equations. Exact definitions are crucial and equations help relate many different factors correctly.

Step 2:

Annotating Lecture Slides

- Take lecture notes that emphasize context – the big picture and what the instructor thinks is important.
- Much of the factual information is typically provided in a syllabus or a lecturer Power Point slides, so just annotate these.
 - Focus on adding context from the lecturer
 - On a power point graph, note the “point” a graph or chart is making, or clearly label the axes.
 - Emphasize any comments of the lecturer on what is important information.
- Use abbreviations and develop your own shorthand from them. As they become habit, your speed will improve a lot.

Step 3:

Active Memorization

- Don't put off memorizing material until just before the exam.
- If you cram all the memorization into the night before, you will have difficulty recalling this information.
- Memorize all concepts as you go and review them as you study later material.



Step 4:

Practice, Practice, Practice

Practicing the application of the knowledge you have acquired is an essential step to ensuring long term memory storage of the material.

- Utilize all questions provided
(practice test questions)
- Clinical Applications in the lab

Putting it all together: Pre, During, Post