

Success Tip: Evaluate Your Study Environment

The amount of time and energy dedicated to studying will ultimately determine your success at the University of Maine. Poor study conditions can decrease concentration and the ability to comprehend and remember material, as well as wasting valuable time. These tips will help you to evaluate your study environment and learn to recognize and remove distractions.

Do you have a definite place to study? Students need a quiet study area free from visual and auditory distractions and with enough space to spread out. It is recommended that you study in the same place regularly to increase your comfort level in the study environment. The tone will already be set, and your surroundings can help motivate you to study.

Are the conditions for studying adequate? Effective study conditions include sufficient quiet, proper temperature, correct lighting, a straight-backed chair and desk/table, and the right physical condition (not ill, fatigued, or hungry/thirsty).

Do you have scheduled times for study? In the “Get Organized” tip, we covered setting up regular study times. Having study time planned into your daily schedule will make it easier to keep yourself on track. Treat study time like an appointment. Organize study time by breaking up studying into 20-30 minute blocks and give yourself a 5-10 minute break between each session. You will find your concentration is better and you will have time to process the information you are learning.

Does your study environment include everything you need? Make sure to have all necessary study aids ready at the time you begin. These might include paper, pencils, highlighters, syllabi, notes, textbooks, computer, etc. You may want to make a checklist of the items you need before you study so you will not forget essential items.

If there are distractions to your studying, how can you remove them? Enhance the quality of studying by examining the factors that are conflicting with your study time. For example, do you need to study in a place where friends are less likely to find you? Learn to say no to people who request things from you during your planned study time. Are you studying in your room, where you are more easily sidetracked? If so, move to a more productive location, silence your phone, and consider trying out a focus app to limit digital distractions.

There is no one technique that will work for everyone. Keep these questions in mind when you study. Controlling environmental factors is a very important part of keeping focused and motivated to study.