



## Study Strategies & Student Wellness

*NAAPIMHA recognizes that students are often under a lot of stress, anxiety, and mental health pressures. This handout aims to equip students with tips, ideas, and reminders to help foster long-term academic success while centering wellness! \*\*These strategies will require a time investment, but in the long run, they can reduce cramming and create a more sustainable and successful academic life.*



### Self-care, Self-awareness, & Grounding

- Take periodic breaks between periods of focusing on school & studying! (consider setting a timer!)
- Remember the school year, high school, and college are all a marathon, not a sprint. You need to take them at a sustainable pace!
- Remember to think about your whole health, periodically checking in with your:
  - **Body:** recognize when you need to sleep/rest, eat to fuel your body & brain, drink water to stay hydrated, stretch/move, and monitor your caffeine intake and its impact on your body.
    - **Reminder:** sleep is critical for processing information, consolidating memory, and promoting concentration! It refreshes you and resets your mind for the day ahead!
  - **Mind:** center yourself and your purpose in school/your education. Monitor and recognize your stress levels.
  - **Spirit:** give yourself permission to take time to have fun, be active, creative, honor any spiritual practices, and connect with others, you need social interaction to live a balanced life!



### Notetaking

- Try the Cornell method: divide the page into three sections: two columns for key concepts/cues on the left, notes on the right, and a summary section at the bottom.
- Take initial notes in class/lectures, then revisit them by re-annotating/re-writing them.
- Try color-coordinating notes if it helps!



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## Reading Versatility

- Approach a reading by previewing it before diving in:
  - Read abstracts, tables of contents, headings, charts/tables, and the conclusion/summary before the body text.
- Look at any questions you are being asked to respond to before reading the text.
- Generate your own questions ahead of reading the text to guide your engagement with the reading → moving beyond surface-level reading into critical, active thinking.
- **Why do this?** You will activate previous knowledge and create mental scaffolding to orient yourself to the assignment and subject.



## Time Management

- Schedule study time with high specificity:
  - Instead of scheduling a generic block of “study time”, set realistic goals/tasks like “read 20 pages of chapter 6 for half an hour”.
    - **Possible schedule:** 50-minute study blocks, 10-minute breaks.
- If there is an interruption to your scheduled study time, reschedule the time as if it is a doctor’s appointment that needs to be revisited.
- Keep your phone/devices out of reach as they can distract you!



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### Effective Studying/Exam Preparation:

- Do as much **active** prep as possible: review study guides, do practice questions, draw out diagrams, create mnemonic devices, create categories, make a detailed/organized formula/note sheet if allowed, etc.
- Study the things you don't know/feel the least comfortable about rather than what you know well and feel comfortable with.
- Be prepared to apply knowledge of class concepts to novel scenarios → interrogate your understanding by asking yourself: "What do I need to know to solve this problem/question?" and "If X part of this question changed how would my approach change?"
- Consider finding a study buddy or creating a study group.
- Know if there is a study center/TA tutoring available.



### Writing:

- Read, re-read, and understand the fundamental components/question(s) of the assignment.
- Pay attention to the use of active versus passive voice, balance academic tone with conciseness, recognize when to use technical vocabulary/abstraction versus when not to.
- Use correct vocabulary within your authentic voice! Don't use words without knowing what they mean or before knowing how to properly use them!
- Free write to get ideas flowing if you feel stuck at any point → then revisit and create an outline.
- Iterative writing: part of the process is drafting, editing, re-reading, re-drafting, etc.
- Get familiar with your central ideas, points, and arguments, but don't get over-committed to the whole of the text preventing you from critically looking at it and developing your ideas further.
- Look for and seek feedback on: clarity, flow, structure, language, use of evidence/argument structure and validity, and use of references in your writing.
- Use spell check tools, proofread for grammar!



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### Other Helpful Tips

- Read the syllabus, know the class policies, the weighting of assignments in your final grade, and when office hours are held.
- Consider where you sit in a classroom/lecture hall to best engage and avoid distractions.
- Think about what you need to focus:
  - Example: does having a fidget tool help? does having erasable pencils/pens ease anxiety about permanent writing tools?
- If you get behind in a class, stay focused on the current assignments/lesson and then return to previous assignments.
- Don't be afraid to reach out, ask for help, and ask your teachers/professors/TAs questions (it's their job to offer support)!
- Take time to humanize and build relationships with your teachers/professors/TAs, they can become invaluable advocates, mentors, and contacts for you!

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