

HOW TO FIT SELF-LEARNING INTO YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE

Schedule Time for Education without Distractions

SCHEDULE TIME FOR EDUCATION WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS



Turn off your phone. Close your email. Shut your door, and put up a Do Not Disturb sign. Tell your friends and family that you're studying and insist that they not interrupt you until a specific time (unless there is an emergency of course). If you have to, put on some headphones to drown out distracting noise (this includes your kids as long as they have adequate supervision).

Have you ever sat down to study (or to read anything for that matter) and found yourself re-reading the same sentence over and over again? You're distracted. Eliminate distractions and your productivity level will skyrocket! You must be vigilant about protecting your study time.

Learn How You Work Most Productively

LEARN HOW YOU WORK MOST PRODUCTIVELY



There is no right or wrong way to study. If you're most productive in the morning, get up early and study for an hour before work. If you're most productive in the afternoon or evening, then you should try to study then. Do what works best for you and ignore what everyone else tells you (even the productivity experts).

If you're stuck, there are some techniques you can try that might increase your productivity. For example, Italian entrepreneur Francesco Cirillo's Pomodoro Technique recommends that you work for 25 minutes and then take a 5 minute break to do something completely different. By working in short increments with breaks, your productivity level might increase.

Another technique is to work in 90 minute increments that match the body's ultradian rhythm. Alternately, you can find your "flow", which Psychology Today refers to as the "optimal state of consciousness where we feel our best and perform our best." It's the time when all aspects of your performance peak.

Stay Organized

STAY ORGANIZED



How good are your organizational skills? Be honest. This is a problem area for many people, but with careful planning and a commitment to not only get organized but also to stay organized, you can recoup hours every week.

First, you need to determine what organizational techniques and tools work for you. For example, you're going to need a calendar. Do you work best with a printed calendar, a digital calendar on your computer, or a mobile calendar on your smartphone? Do you like Google Calendar because it integrates with your Gmail account? There are many options, so take the time to test some calendaring options and find the one that you're most comfortable with.

Once you know how you're going to track all of your to do's on a calendar, you need to create monthly, weekly, and daily schedules. Look at them at the start of every day. Update them throughout the day as needed, and review and edit them again at night. If they're not current, they're useless. Most importantly, stick to your schedules! This requires a lot of self-discipline, but it must be done.

Get Support

GET SUPPORT



It's hard to educate yourself without some kind of support. You need the support of your friends and family, and if possible, you need the support of your coworkers and boss. Your schedule is going to be very busy as you're learning, so you need to set their expectations at the very beginning.

You can also get support from mentors and instructors, but if you're learning online, you might not have access to these people. Don't go it alone. There are many website and online forums as well as social media groups that you can join to communicate with other people who are educating themselves while raising a family, working full-time, or both! They're an excellent source of support.

Use the Resources Available to You

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