One Dozen Ways to Stretch Your Study Time

1. Study on the bus. Make flashcards of appropriate materials, and keep these in your pocket to review while you ride the bus or carpool.

2. Recite content while you fold laundry, do dishes, dust, vacuum, or do any other repetitive, mindless chores. Reciting while you are physically active can really support learning and memory.

3. Come in ½ to one hour early at least one day per week. Use that time to organize yourself, review notes, recap/re-write notes, do homework.

4. Stay late an extra hour or two at least 1 day per week. Use that time to organize yourself, review notes, recap/re-write notes, do homework.

5. Get up early on Saturday morning and do your homework/studying before you get into your other Saturday activities. You’ll have a lot more fun on Saturday night if your homework is done – right?

6. Get organized. Get a study place, assemble all the tools and materials you will need to work on a subject for 45 minutes - 1 hour, then get down to business. Make a pact with yourself that you will use that space for studying only and stick to it. Eventually you will condition yourself to begin working as soon as you sit down in your “study spot”. When you have put in the required time on a subject, close your books and put them in another place. Use the break between subjects to assemble the tools and materials you will need to study another subject. Then get back to work.
7. Make a “to do” list. You can do this for each day, week, etc. List the tasks you have to complete, and follow the list, checking things off as you get them done. It is motivating; it makes you want to get on to the next task. Consequently, you waste less time.

8. Set a specific goal for each study session. Consult your “to do” list. If you know what you want to accomplish, you will not waste time procrastinating. As you reach your goals, check them off your list.

9. Prioritize your tasks. Budget time according to mark values and due dates of different assignments.

10. Invest some time in learning to increase your reading speed. It seems counter-intuitive, but reading more quickly supports comprehension. When you read a little bit faster than your normal comfortable rate, you make yourself concentrate. Accept that reading to study and learn is work, and learn ways to make your reading time productive.

11. Don’t recopy notes. If you feel the need to re-write notes, re-work them into a new format. For example, if you take outline notes in class, re-write them onto a poster in web format, or create a question/answer page. Changing the format of written material is a powerful learning tool.

12. Be careful when you study in a group. It is really easy for groups to get off-track and waste time. At the beginning of each group study session, clarify the goal(s) for that session, and keep your activities focused on that goal. Keep socializing separate from studying.