

# Creating an Ideal Study Area

Selecting an ideal study area is crucial in your ability to concentrate. This concentration will allow you to properly encode and process information so that you can produce your best work.

There are three main objectives to consider in creating an ideal study area...

1. Noise
2. Lighting
3. Workspace

## Noise levels in your study area should be favorable to studying

Are you a person who requires complete silence to concentrate, or can you deal with some noises and sounds without losing your concentration?

Even if you think that you can effectively study in a noisy environment, one that is too noisy will negatively affect your ability to study, think critically, and comprehend what you are studying. Also, you might want to consider turning that cell phone off, or at least silencing it while you study. Let your friends and family know that you will be glad to talk to or hang out with them when you are finished studying so they refrain from “bugging you” when you need to be quietly studying.

Do you like to listen to music when you study? Research has shown that music with lyrics and many variations in rhythm can cause concentration to turn on and off. Music that is soft, such as classical or instrumental, does not cause this on and off pattern. Soft music has been shown to actually assist in studying and learning. Find an instrumental or easy-listening station on your radio dial and give it a try!

## Lighting levels affect an ideal study area

What is the proper level of lighting when you study? As you have probably already noticed, studying with lights too low can lead to strained and tired eyes. What about having only one light turned on? This can create a shadow on your text making it more difficult to read.

The answer is to have a couple of different sources of light when you study. This may seem trivial, but having a good amount of light can really make a difference in your concentration and ability to get through material successfully.

## A work space that allows for optimum concentration

Make sure you have room! This is so very important in creating a nice work space. You have to have room to spread out your study materials so that you will not be distracted with trying to find things.

Also, rid your study area of unnecessary clutter. Just move it away from where you study since you do not need it. It simply creates further distractions that you do not need when trying to concentrate on studying.

Finally, find a chair that is comfortable, but not one in which you will fall asleep, and make sure it is also sturdy. As tempting as it might be to study on the floor, a couch, bed, or other cozy spot, you must get up and move away from these areas for optimal learning to occur.

Adapted from: Wong, L. (2006). *Essential study skills* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

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