

# 4 More Ways to Study Smart

(Hint: They are NOT What You Think!)

1

**Drink (lots) of water.** Why? Because dehydration sneaks up on you. You might say, “Oh, I’m not thirsty right now.” Or, “But I’ve been drinking coffee/tea/sodas all day.” Substances with caffeine are diuretics – they actually make your body shed water. In addition, two of the most common symptoms of dehydration are sleepiness and headaches, not necessarily feeling thirsty. **To use this strategy:** Have a large bottle or glass of water handy and take regular sips while you’re studying. That will help keep your brain awake and alert.



2

**Take a (short) catnap.** Why? Because medical research indicates that a short nap (about 10-20 minutes) improves the brain’s short-term alertness. Even a 5-minute rest inserted into a study hour can have a positive effective on the brain’s ability to stay awake and focused. **To use this strategy:** If possible, stretch out flat on your back, with your legs resting on a footstool, pillows, or some other source of elevation. That way you take all the pressure off your back and surrounding muscles. Put a small pillow or rolled towel underneath your neck to support your head. Then, take a few deep, slow breaths to begin your short catnap. Your body – and brain – will feel refreshed and alert afterwards.

3

**Explain it to someone.** Why? Because when you explain the information you’re studying to someone else, your brain has to process the information three times:

1. When you first hear or read the information;
2. When you think about how to explain it in your own words;
3. When you actually verbalize it by telling someone else about it.

**To use this strategy:** Tell a family member, friend, your cat, dog, (or an imaginary person) what you’re learning about. It’s that simple.

4

**Use body parts to boost your memory.** Why? Because “anchoring” – a “neurolinguistic memory tool” – simply means touching a part of your body (example: your shoulder) while reciting a specific thing you want to remember. Do this at least six times over the course of a couple of hours. The repetition of information while touching the chosen body part will help move the information into long-term memory. **To use this strategy:** Assign the most important concepts you’re learning (say, six of them) to six body parts (knee, hip, waist, shoulder, elbow, top of head). Recite each item as you touch the body part it’s assigned to. Then repeat this procedure intermittently during the study time or during the day. Over time, you will remember the information with ease.