

**I Forgot What I Studied Just Yesterday!** There's got to be a better way!

*How to study for long-term memory*

There's a big test this week and you stayed up all night last night cramming all the information that you need to remember to ace the test.

Now it's a week later and you're wondering what happened to all those facts, figures, and dates that you spent so much energy studying? You did great on the test, but now that some time has passed you barely remember what class you were studying for.

All those eleventh hour study-a-thons and the eventual and inevitable forgetting should be giving credence to what you suspected all along—that when it comes to studying and long-term recall, cramming doesn't work.

Developing top-notch study skills is one way of combating the so-called forgetting curve. Skills such as starting early, paraphrasing, and active learning can help you avoid a last minute cram-a-thon and hopefully help you remember what you've studied for longer than one week.

Planning, organizing, time management, taking notes—Man, studying is a lot of work! Wouldn't it be great if a computer could tell you when to study so that you never forgot? According to Wired Magazine, such a program exists.

The program was developed in response to decades of research into memory and optimal learning. What researchers found was that there is an ideal moment to review material that you have learned so that you don't forget it. It's called the spacing effect and it's the best-known way to remember what you have learnt so that you never forget.

You don't need a computer to master this skill (although a computer program can help.) The trick is to be able to recognize the moment when you are about to forget something and review at that moment so that you don't spend too long studying something that you might only forget later. If you wait too long to review, then you've forgotten the material. Too soon and there's no point.

Practice the spacing effect and improve your study skills. Here's how:

- Look up a word that you've never heard of
- Write down the word and the definition on a piece of paper
- Wait a day or so and try to see if you can remember
- If yes, choose another word and wait longer
- If no, choose another word and shorten the length of time
- Keep track of how much time passes before you begin to forget

The theory is that if you study at the moment that you are about to forget, you will remember better and for longer periods of time.

let's talk

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