



The Concentration Cycle

Using a 60-minute time period, including a 10-minute break, you can create the ideal study session. By following the following format you will be able to optimize your study sessions and retain a greater amount of information.

Stage 1: Scan and Plan

When you begin any study session you are in a light concentration mode so you do not want to begin attacking new material just yet. Spend the first five minutes gathering materials, planning out your study session, and scanning over the material you are going to cover paying close attention to headings, subheadings, graphs, charts, pictures, diagrams, etc.

Stage 2: Ongoing Review

Now spend about ten minutes going over past material—carefully checking for understanding and retention. You want to do this at each study session so that you will be able to start linking ideas together and adding new information to that which you have already acquired.

Stage 3: Learning

For the next 35 minutes you will read, take notes, memorize, analyze, compare and contrast, etc. Make sure you do this without any disruptions or distractions. You want to totally focus all of your attention on the subject matter. You will be amazed at what you can learn in 35 minutes.

Stage 4: Study Break

For the last 10 minutes take a break—you need a change in activity. Spend this time returning phone calls, eating a snack, taking a walk, etc. You will be refreshed and ready to tackle another 1-hour study session.

Note: If you break concentration anywhere in this process, you will need to start over from the beginning. A chopped up study session leads to only pieces of information which have little to no connections.