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Creating a Routine to Succeed in School

Determine what **your goals** are

The first step to creating any successful routine is **determining what you want to achieve**. Think of it like your New Year's resolutions — but ones you actually stick with. Do you want to get better grades? Manage your time better? Feel more prepared? Whatever your goals are, use them to **help structure your routine**.

Routine **basics**

Everyone has their own routine that works for them, but every successful routine includes these main factors. Keep these in mind as you're planning your daily routine.

1. **Get enough sleep**

Sleep plays a huge role in how productive we are the next day. By having a **set time to go to bed and wake up**, your body adapts quicker, allowing you to feel refreshed when you wake up.

Avoid screens before bed; the blue light will trick your brain into thinking it's still daytime, and you'll have difficulty falling asleep. You could try a blue light blocking app — or better yet, just put your phone down!

2. **Nutrition**

Food is where we get our energy for the day. Make sure you're eating **three healthy meals a day**, and snacking on **brain-boosting foods** such as blueberries, nuts, and veggies. Try to avoid sugar, as this will make you feel tired quicker. Don't forget to **stay hydrated**! If you're feeling tired or foggy, chances are you haven't had enough water today.

3. **Be consistent**

The hardest part about creating routines is staying consistent. There will be some days where you just want to stay in bed. One way to get out of a funk is to **do something right when you wake up** that you enjoy. That way you're starting your day off on a positive note, and you're more likely to feel motivated.

How to **get organized**

Organization is the most helpful tool when establishing a routine, but it can be difficult to know where to start. Try these tips and tricks to help you get organized!

1. **Find a calendar that works for you**

Whether you prefer to have your days planned out **on paper or in an app**, there are many options available. Try to stick with **one calendar** only. If you use more than one, you risk missing appointments and creating scheduling conflicts.
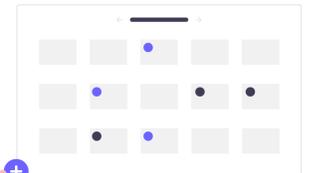
2. **Set aside time to review your calendar**

The benefit of using a calendar is you can plan your time according to how busy some days are. It's best to **set aside at least one day a week to review your calendar.** This will help you determine your daily tasks, prioritize what needs to be done first, and mentally prepare you for your upcoming week.

3. **Declutter & optimize your study space**

It's easiest to work when you are free of distractions, so it helps to **start off with a clean study area**. When studying, you should mimic the test or exam environment to maximize your efficiency. **Avoid studying in cozy spots!** Sit at a table or desk, and not on a couch or bed. If you're comfy, you're more likely to get sleepy.

4. **Colour coordinate**

Colour coordination is the best trick to staying organized. **Colour coding your subjects to match your notes** will ensure that your notes don't get mixed up. You can use this in your calendar as well and you'll have a **visual example** of what subjects may require more of your time. You could also **colour coordinate the tasks in your calendar** — upcoming tests are highlighted in yellow, study time in blue, and extracurriculars in green.

Plan your time effectively

Before scheduling your days, it's best to **know what works best for you** and cater to that. Are you a morning or night person? Can you stay focused for longer periods of time? These questions can help determine how to plan your time. Don't be afraid to experiment. Change things up if they're not working for you.

1. **Create a daily to-do list**

Write down everything you want to accomplish today, **prioritizing** the most important task first and considering how long each may take. **Checking off each task as you go** can help motivate you.

2. **Break up intimidating tasks**

If you have a large project due or need a few hours of time to study for a test, don't do it all in one sitting. **Break up these tasks** into smaller, **more manageable subtasks**. This will r**educe your stress** and allow you to spend the proper amount of time on these tasks. Google the "**Pomodoro technique**" for a handy way to break your tasks into chunks.
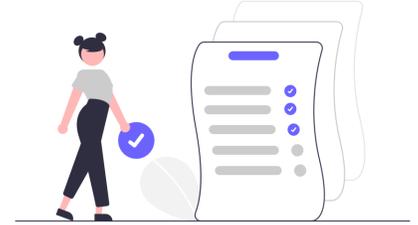
Stay motivated – reward yourself

A simple way to stay motivated is by **establishing a rewards system** for getting stuff done. After accomplishing each goal or task, give yourself a reward. Your **rewards can range in size** depending on the size of the task. If you've completed a small task, **grab a snack that you enjoy** or go for a quick walk. If you've finished a large task, **plan a movie night** or something that will help you relax. Don't burn yourself out by trying to work for hours on end without some kind of break. Be kind to yourself!
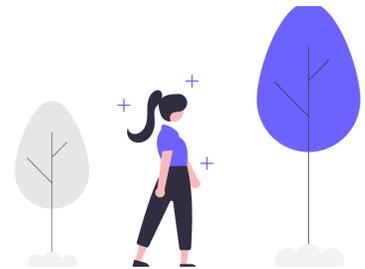
Just **breathe**

If you begin to get off track with your routine, **don't stress!** Take a deep breath and try again. It's better to recognize your slip and try again than to give up entirely.

If you're having trouble establishing your routine, **ask your friends and family what works for them**. They might have some suggestions that you've never thought of. But don't forget, **cater your routine to what works best for you**. Just because something works for someone else, doesn't mean it's best for you.

Happy planning!

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