



University Counselling

Enhancing Cognitive Functioning

📄 Online resources

Online Counselling

You might also consider our 'Stress', 'Meditation' and 'Relaxation' tip sheets.

📱 Apps

Search on the App Store or Google Play

SelfControl

Allows you to put a lock on your computer and mobile devices to restrict use of websites and apps that distract you

Breathe2Relax

Practice slowing your breathing down and extending your inhale

Smiling Mind

(web & App versions available)
Smiling Mind is a mindfulness app with a number of different audio scripts to help you develop your mindfulness skills

Caffeine

Track the amount and impact that caffeine has on your sleep cycle

Do you want to use your memory to get better results?

Are you wasting time trying to force yourself to study?

Are you thinking "I never do well in exams. What's wrong with me?"

While you are here at university your brain is going to be your best asset and your best friend. How well are you looking after it? It actually takes a lot of energy to run your brain and while it accounts for just 2% of your body weight it uses 20% of your body's oxygen, 20% of your blood, and 24% of your glucose.

It's important to look after your brain to get the best results. This means exercising, healthy eating, getting adequate rest and sleep, managing your stress, limiting alcohol and caffeine and avoiding drugs. If you are doing these and want a few extra tips on getting the best results from your brain then try the following:

- 1 Go for a walk before an exam to help improve your cognitive functioning.
- 2 When you are studying, try teaching the material to someone or something else (pets, siblings, a camera).
- 3 Reward yourself with a small treat at the end of each block within the subject and a bigger reward at the end of a topic.
- 4 Create mental associations with the use of mind maps – use different colours to break into topic areas and different lines to show relationships between certain topics.
- 5 Draw diagrams to help you recall processes, parts of the body, machines etc.
- 6 Use a font that you find easy to read. Arial or Times New Roman are good ones.
- 7 Create flash cards in different colours to help you review the material.
- 8 Watch a documentary or TED Talk on the topic of cognitive functioning.
- 9 Vary your place of study – changing environment helps you improve recall and retention.
- 10 Use practice exams.
- 11 Take regular study breaks – after 1.5 hrs without a break no new information is assimilated.
- 12 Study in a group.
- 13 Don't stay up all night the night before an exam, sleep improves the functioning of the brain.
- 14 Engage in some meditation or relaxation techniques to improve concentration and reduce stress levels.
- 15 Use an app such as SelfControl that helps block your access to social media and websites for a specific period of time.

Give these tips a go and see if you can improve your results this semester!