



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

STUDYING WITH FRIENDS

Student Life - Counselling Support

If you are having trouble motivating yourself to study, it may be because:

- you have too much to do and don't know where to start
- too much depends on the results and you are too scared to start
- you are a perfectionist, you want to do it perfectly and can't move on to the next task
- you experience time management difficulties
- you are easily distracted, everything else is more interesting
- (e.g. surveying the fridge)
- your reasons for studying are unclear
- or a lack of interest in the subject material
- you are experiencing personal difficulties that are making it difficult to study.

Studying alone sometimes makes these problems seem worse. Feeling deprived, lonely and bored can make the prospect of study almost impossible. It may be worthwhile trialing a study arrangement with a friend. It doesn't need to be with someone doing the same subject or even the same course. Ideally it is with someone you enjoy spending time with who is committed to study and who is supportive of your goals.

Some students find studying together to be an invaluable process. It's a bit like joining a gym, you are more likely to keep going if you go with someone else. Given a choice we usually prefer to work alongside others to reassure ourselves that we are not alone in the world when it comes to effort and hard work.

If you try it, there are some pretty important things to think about. Studying with a friend (or group of friends) can't be an excuse for a chat. It is a mutual commitment to encourage and support each other not distract and sabotage.

Before you begin discuss the following:-

- What are your needs and what are your most significant difficulties? (e.g. You need really good marks to pull up a grade from 1st semester but you can't get started and usually stop at difficult places.)

- What are your most effective study times and associated tasks? (eg. First thing in the morning for writing or solving problems, mid-afternoon for research, late afternoon for photo-copying or word processing.)
- Compare your time tables. Is it possible to meet in the library or at home? Is talking on the telephone about study blocks and successes helpful? Are telephone calls during specified times a good way to have a break?

Plan swot vac together, e.g.:

9 00 - 11.00	Study
11.00 - 11.30	Walk / talk / coffee
11.30 - 1.00	Study
1.00 - 2.00	Lunch / walk / talk
2.00 - 3.30	Study
3.30 - 4.00	Walk / talk
4.00 - 5.30	Study

Rules

If you want to make this work it is important to establish ground rules before beginning:

- Don't support the excuses of the other person as to why they "can't" study at a particular time.
- Don't let the other person down if you have arranged to study together.
- Arrange to have breaks together at particular times.
- Don't interrupt the other person before the agreed time.
- Decide in advance what you would like to do in the break (exercise, lunch, coffee etc).

- Determine how long your breaks are going to be and commit yourselves to sticking to them and returning to study no matter how much you are enjoying the walk, talk etc.
- Keep a list next to you whilst studying and if you think of something you would like to say to your study partner jot it down rather than interrupt them. This also helps you to let go of the thought and concentrate on the task at hand
- If you are studying the same topic be careful not to compete.
- Act as mentors for each other when tackling difficult tasks.
- Regular rewards for working well are also worthwhile e.g. Going to the movies together at the end of a successful week of study.
- Sometimes going away together during swot vac can be very beneficial. Ensure the focus is on studying, and not an excuse for a holiday, and you can plan a holiday as a reward if the study goes well!

Important Note:

Both of you (or all of you) need to really want to succeed at the task of studying as well as help each other. This arrangement needs to be equal in commitment and all players need to benefit. This method is not designed for everyone. If you study better alone - stick with what works for you.

Counselling Support is available to assist students with personal difficulties that are affecting their study.

The service provides:

- Individual Counselling by appointment
- Telephone Counselling by appointment
- Mental health emergency response

Counselling Support

Ground Floor, Horace Lamb Building

The University of Adelaide

Ph: +61 8 8313 5663

After hours support: 1300 167 654 or sms 0488 884 197

This pamphlet was written by Flinders University Health and Counselling Services and has been reprinted as part of a collaborative project between the counselling services at Flinders and Adelaide University. Modified by Student Life Counselling Support.

Reviewed Feb 2017