Top 10 Habits of Successful College Students

1. They attend class. This might sound trite and obvious. Some classes are boring. Some professors are unexciting, or obnoxious. Some classes are at an inconvenient time. Research on college students indicates that higher class attendance correlates with higher grades, earlier completion of degrees and simply staying at the university instead of dropping or flunking out. And since they’re there, successful students take notes and participate.

2. They sit in front. It’s easier to hear, easier to pay attention and easier to “read” the instructor’s cues as to what information is important. Listening is one of the most important, yet least recognized, skills necessary for learning from lectures. To listen effectively, you must “engage” the instructor - that is, create an internal conversation between you and your instructor as they are lecturing. This includes actively anticipating and questioning what the lecturer says, and sorting or categorizing the information being presented. Engaging the instructor is easier if you sit where you can see and hear clearly.

3. They attend office hours. Most faculty members have a diversified background above and beyond the course materials. They are a valuable resource to stimulate new ideas. They also are excellent resources for networking. The time spent in one-to-one conversation with a faculty member can influence the choice of a major or a career.

4. They study on schedule. Studies show that two hours of study for each hour of class time is about right. Managing oneself properly by setting aside blocks of time and a good spot with little or no distractions on a weekly basis is ideal. It is much easier to remain current with a class than to rush to catch up in the days before an exam.

5. They choose courses wisely. Picking a course in a subject you are interested in, or one taught by an instructor you like adds additional motivation which usually translates to better grades and enjoyment. College life is hard enough without adding the additional stress of classes and instructors you dislike.

6. They exercise. Good cardiovascular fitness translates into alertness, good attention span, better sleep and more energy. In order to maintain a healthy lifestyle you should be engaging in 20 minutes of aerobic activity 3 times a week.

7. They are involved in campus life. Your college is full of opportunities to broaden your horizons. Join an organization. Every campus has officially recognized groups where like minded people come together to pursue similar interests. Make friends and have fun at the same time.

8. They eat healthy. Our bodies are complicated biological machines. They need proper fuel to keep them running at peak efficiency. A good diet is a balanced one — lots of different foods and not too much of any one food. That way you get all the nutrients that you need.

9. They drink moderately or not at all. Overdoing it only leads to headaches, upset stomach, acting foolishly and the chance of harming yourself or someone else, slowing your brain activity, affecting your alertness, coordination and reaction time. Until more is known about how alcohol affects your health, your best bet — if you choose to drink — is to drink in moderation. Generally, moderation means no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two drinks a day for men. Because of their body chemistry and composition, women are more sensitive to alcohol than men are.

10. They have fun. All work and no play leads to stress which inhibits academic performance. Reward yourself for your good study habits with a bit of fun.