

STUDY SESH 101

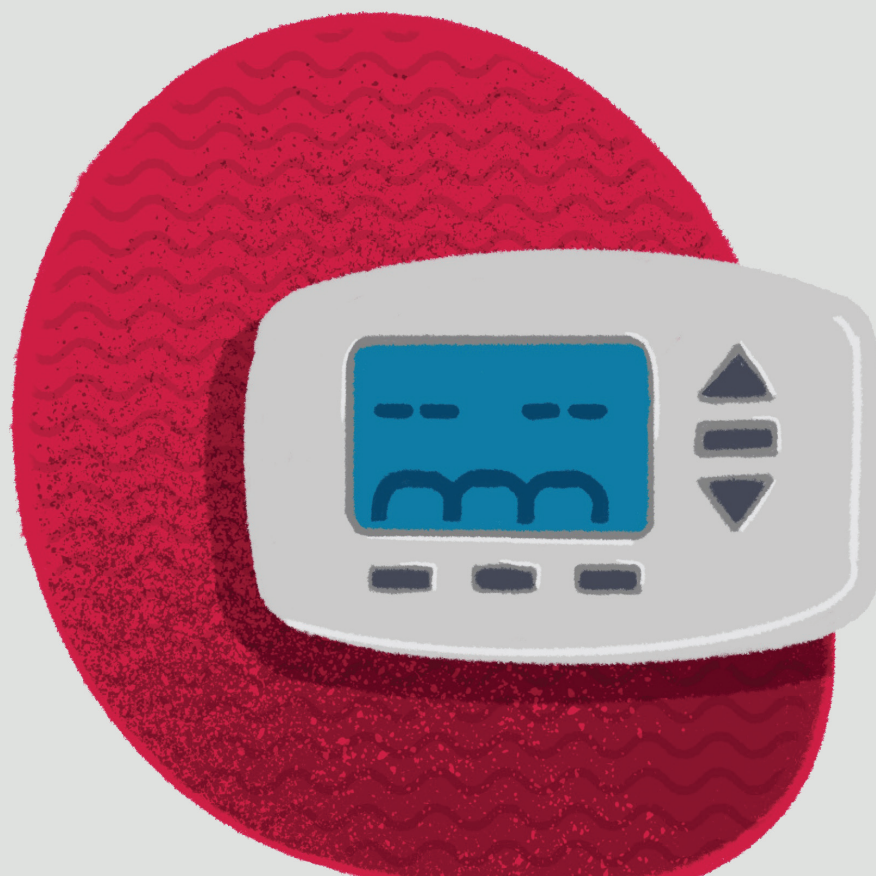
Crafting the Ultimate Space

We all know that no final exam prep is as crammable and no research paper is as writeable without one amazing location to make it happen. And, the truth is, not all study spaces are built alike. Here's a handy rundown of how to turn your favorite knowledge nook into the ultimate study space.



WHAT'S THE TEMP?

Did you know that the temperature of your study environment could have an impact on your productivity and retention? Whether you run a bit hot or cold, if you've strayed from your ideal number, it might distract you from the task at hand. In fact, a study from Berkeley National Laboratory found that it's easiest to be productive in a temperature ranging from **72-77°F**, a range outside of which, more mistakes were found to occur.



HOW'S THE LIGHTING?

We all know that familiar sound the buzz of a dated or ill suited overhead light. But how distracting can it really be for getting your schoolwork done? The fact of the matter is, the way your study space is lit can do a number on your retention abilities. Depending on the type of work you're doing, lighting can have a subconscious impact a study from Cologne University indicated that students worked best on creative endeavors in **"warm" light** but yielded stronger concentration under **"cold" light**.

YOU HEAR THAT?

Depending on your concentration, you may be best suited to the near-complete silence of a library or dedicated study room. But others might find a bit of ambient noise to be just the right kind of "distraction." The whirring of espresso machines or the indecipherable chatter of nearby students might be your perfect "background noise." A study from the Journal of Consumer Research actually found that a moderate level of ambient noise, **approximately 70 decibels**, can enhance creative performance.



FEELING HUNGRY?

Okay, so your first inclination when study time rolls around and your stomach is growling is probably to grab for a bag of chips, a chocolate bar and an energy drink. But these selections probably won't benefit your cognitive abilities long-term. The true "brain food" are ones that keep you hydrated, enhance your metabolism and balance out your blood sugar levels. Look for foods with **omega-3 fatty acids and dietary fibers** and memory-boosting **fruits and vegetables**. (Oh, and drink lots of water.)



BUSY SIGNAL?

Is there anything more aggravating than waiting for your device to reconnect to a wi fi network when time is of the essence? Be sure to track down a space where the signal is strong. It'll prevent headaches with connectivity issues particularly when completing work or studying via a web connected app or platform where a loss of connection could result in loss of work. Avoid putting **concrete or brick walls** between you and the access point, as it may interfere with signal strength.



WHO'S THERE?

One of the likeliest forms of distraction from high quality studying is technological smartphones, push notifications and other forms of electronic communication can disrupt the process. But when outright turning off your devices isn't an option, consider setting an auto reply on texts and emails to let people know when you'll be available to talk. Then tuck that smartphone away to resist the temptation. If potential emergencies are a concern, enlist a friend or roommate to be a designated point of contact to come find you if your immediate attention is necessary.



WHO'S THAT?

We all love our friends and family but when it comes time to meet an important course deadline, some solitude might be key. To avoid personal distraction, try selecting a space where **likelihood of running into pals is limited**. Or, better yet, make sure your nearest and dearest know that you've got an allotted time to knock out some studying so they know not to interrupt your flow.

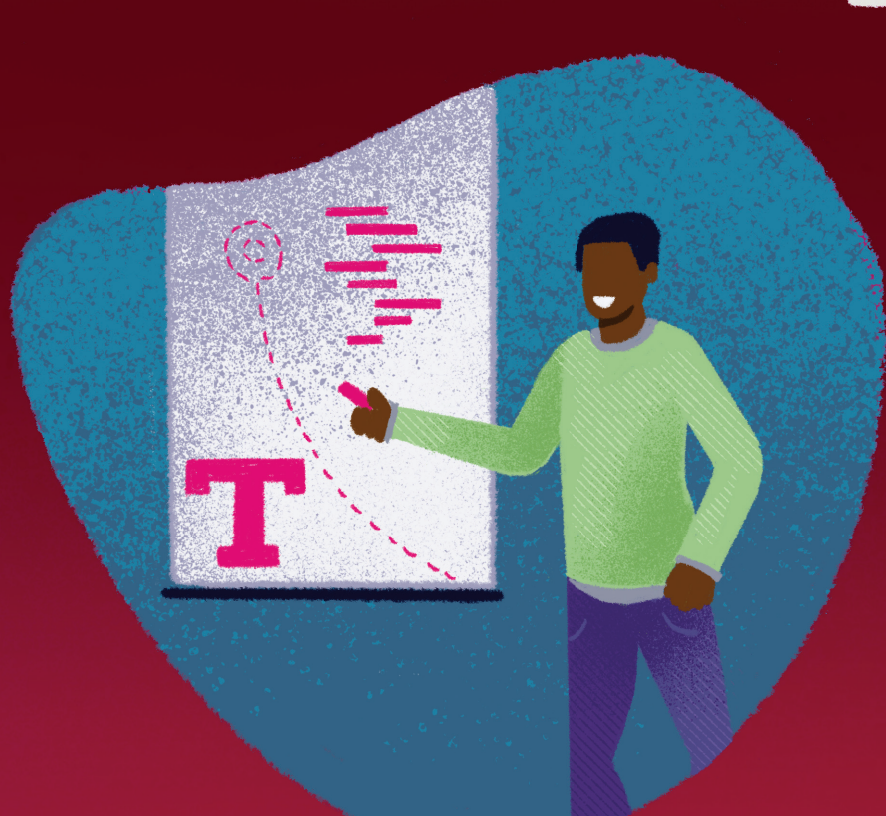
SITTING ON THE JOB?

So how about that chair? Ergonomics are crucially important when it comes to studying, but what matters most? Some of the most important factors in concentration as it relates to seating are an adjustable-height surface, a footrest and the ability to stand and work.



BREATHE MUCH?

A lengthy study session will mean committing to a location and an environment for a long period of time. So consider a space with good airflow that will keep your breathing healthy, moderate and satisfying. One major factor in this endeavor is plant life. Keeping oxygenation optimum improves your brainpower, and one of the best natural ways to c through air-quality-improving plants. Even something as simple as a small potted aloe or snake plant can work w



NEED VISUAL AIDS?

Not all students have the same level of visualization capability. As such, it's always a good idea to give pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. Track down a space with a built in space for concepting, such as a **whiteboard or smartboard**. Or consider outfitting yourself with a personal dry erase slate or tablet and stylus to visualize your tasks at hand in whatever way you see fit.



NEED A BREAK?

An hours long study session can feel like a drag without the occasional break. In fact, not allowing yourself brief bouts of brain breaks can have a negative impact on your concentration and retention. Schedule five minute time slots to do something physical throughout your study time even something as simple as a walk around campus. Just use your time wisely a study from the Huffington Post found that using your free time to engage in social media, calling or messaging friends or making use of tech devices can result in added stress and reduced performance.

READY TO STUDY TOWARD A DEGREE?

Talk to a Western team member today.
608-785-9200 | AdmissionsCoach@westerntc.edu