



JCC Learning Centre

Revision Toolkit

Suitable for all students

10 Steps to Create the Perfect Revision Space

Declutter

Having an untidy desk and room will make it harder to find things, stress you out and present an easy way to procrastinate. Your first priority when setting up a study space should be to get everything organised.

Keep Distractions Away

What most commonly distracts you from work? Make sure none of them are anywhere near your study space. Television, laptops and phones are the obvious ones to avoid.

Get comfy

No-one wants to be spending hours every day uncomfortable. While it's not advisable to revise in bed, you should definitely be working somewhere comfy enough to get absorbed in your work.

Let There Be Light

Lighting is one of the most important things to a room's mood so find the right level for you. Too dark and you'll be straining to read and feeling tired, but lights that are too bright can be overstimulating and may contribute to headaches or stress. Try and get as much natural light as possible to minimise these negative effects.

Set the Noise Levels

How your revision space sounds is just as important as how it looks. Some people need background noise to get any work done while others will benefit from perfect silence. Whatever your preference, try to work somewhere with a consistent noise level.

Personalise It

If you're spending hours every day in one place, add some personal touches to it. Leave some photos or items of personal significance close by to help keep you grounded and inject some colour to boost your mood. It should be your zone - do whatever will improve it for you!

Make it Easy to Manage Your Time

A clock should be easily visible from where you sit, not a smartphone as it may lead to distraction. Keep a revision schedule close by so you always know what you need to be doing and how long you have to do it

Get Your Supplies Ready

Your revision flow will be broken up constantly if you keep getting up to find stationery. Ensure everything you use regularly is accessible to save time and energy better spent studying or taking a proper break.

Maintain it

Don't allow your space to become messy and disorganised. Don't leave out books or work that you don't need urgently and dedicate five minutes every morning to cleaning up the room you'll be working in.

Remember: There Are More Important Things

It's easy to convince yourself you're being productive when creating a study space but it become a form of procrastination itself. The most important thing about having a study space is to actually revise.

Tip:

Use coloured pens or paper to make the notes visually engaging, you can then stick them on the wall so you're reminded of the information regularly. Use colour to highlight key dates, names and theories to easily recall information on the topic.

How to Take a Study Break

There's more to effective revision than reading through textbooks. Resting is as essential as working. Make sure you have the most energising study breaks possible.

Get Active

It's pretty difficult to exercise when revising. Unfortunately, being hunched over a desk or laptop can be unhealthy in both the short and long term. The best way to counteract this is to build little bits of activity into your schedule. Use your breaks to stand up, stretch and walk around. You'll be amazed at how much it can do to make you feel positive.

Get Away From Your Workspace

If you spend both your working hours and your breaks sitting at a laptop, the two can start to blur into one. The best way to avoid this is to get away from your study zone. Find a reason to go into another room or just go for a quick walk. This will give you a quick hit of exercise and help keep breaks separate from work.

Have Something to Eat and Drink

It's crucial to keep yourself well fed and hydrated when you're working. Your body and brain need energy to maintain focus and ignoring this is the quickest way to find your mind wandering. Eat and drink the right things to keep yourself topped up and focused for longer periods.

Avoid Napping

It can be tempting to nap during breaks, especially after a long day of revision. However, it's important to resist this urge! A nap can leave you feeling groggy for the rest of the day or stop you sleeping properly at night, meaning you'll only need more sleep the next day. Even worse, you might oversleep and lose precious hours.

Human Contact

If you're revising by yourself it's very easy to feel cut off from everyone else. It's not good for your mental health to be isolated from the rest of the world for long periods of time so try and get as much human contact as you can into your day. A face-to-face conversation is best but a phone call or a group chat does the job. Even a quick trip to the shops provides vital interaction.

Stick to Your Schedule

Whether you prefer to rest little and often or need breaks to refresh, make sure you allocate your time wisely. There's nothing more damaging to your schedule than a 10 minute break that turns into an entire afternoon. Allow yourself the time you need but resist the urge to treat yourself to "just one more minute"- you'll enjoy your breaks more if you aren't feeling guilty about the work you're avoiding.

Do Something You Enjoy

You know how to restore yourself best. While some sites may tell you to avoid Facebook or playing videogames for the duration of your day, you may find it easier in the long term to treat yourself rather than depriving fun and feeling more stressed as a result. As long as breaks are in moderation, don't worry too much about how you spend your downtime.

Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself

Revising day after day is tough. It's natural to sometimes get distracted or take a little more time off than you intended to. The most important thing to do when this happens is to not stress about it or let it affect your overall revision plan.

Tip:

Look at flashcards whilst doing an activity, such as running on a treadmill in the gym or whilst walking around the park. Try carrying some in your bag for a quick test on the bus.

Learning the Content

There are many different ways to learn exam content. Some people find rewriting notes an effective memory technique, others prefer condensing information into mind maps.

If you're unsure which technique works best for you then try a variety.

Initial Memory Test

To help establish where your strengths, pick a topic you find challenging and give yourself 5 minutes to write out everything you know about the subject. Alternatively, find a past paper and rate how confident you feel answering the questions.

Condense the Information

For each topic, divide the important information into sections. Once you've memorised the key categories, you'll find it easier to make connections between each concept in an exam setting. Begin with these categories then add some subject specific ideas of your own:

- ***Important dates***
- ***Names and theories***
- ***Case studies (plan how to fit them into various questions)***

Start by looking through the notes you've written in class and highlight the key dates, names, case studies or theories in different colours. Divide them into sections and form your main arguments linking one thing from each category.

What to Eat and Drink

Regularly

Water

Drinking water frequently will keep you hydrated and help your body function. Keep a bottle near to stay topped up.

Fruit and Veg

Full of vitamins and nutrients that boost your brain and body. Find a few you like and add them into your diet regularly.

Fish

Fish is a superfood. High in protein and Omega 3, without the negative effects that can come with meat.

Eggs

As well as being delicious, eggs are high in protein. They're a good choice for an energising breakfast to start your day.

Nuts

Nuts (or nut butters) are indulgent enough to satisfy that snack craving but have numerous health benefits.

Occasionally

Sugar

Foods high in sugar, such as chocolate and sweets, can be tempting as a quick, tasty energy boost. However, the sugar rush is temporary and may leave you feeling tired and restless.

Fast Food

The scientific evidence against fast food is overwhelming. It doesn't provide the nutrients your body needs leaves you craving more salt. Think of takeaways and burgers as an occasional treat rather than regular meals.

Coffee

In small doses, coffee can boost your concentration, wake you up in the morning, or just be a little luxury. However, too much can make you restless and ruin your sleep pattern.

Snacks

Even if you snack healthily, moderation is important. Eating little and often instead of three proper meals a day makes it harder to stick to routines and get all the nutrients you need.

Revision Techniques

Brainstorming

A good technique for visual learners

Write your event/theme/theorist in the centre of the page and draw a bubble around it. Write key information around the central concept. Initially, include a lot of information and detail. The key is to repeat this process a few times and try to condense each version until you've memorised the main points and can expand in detail from those prompts. You could also try making lists or plotting dates on a timeline then annotating around.

Flash Cards

A good technique for visual or kinesthetic learners

Flash cards are useful for condensing information and using for memory work. Do not overuse them though - too many flash cards filled with writing won't help and will take ages to make. They are most useful for quick fire active recall on short answers like dates/definitions/people.

Group Revision

A good technique for auditory, linguistic and social learners

A good method to help revision is group collaboration. If there are lots of topics to learn, break them down and divide between the group. Each person then has to revise key facts for that area. Regroup and feedback what each person has learnt to the rest of the group, effectively trying to teach the content again. For each topic, think of some key questions to consider. Group work will spark discussion and raise points and links you may not have thought of. Actively teaching will help you remember information.

Revision Techniques

Recording Your Notes

A good technique for auditory and linguistic learners.

Read through your notes aloud and record yourself on your phone, then listen back when you're walking to College or washing the dishes. The shorter the recording, the better as you will need to be able to remember key details. Some people find falling asleep to the recording can help, whilst others might find it useful to background noise whilst making flash cards.

Repetition

No matter what techniques you choose, the key to learning is to repeat the information again and again.

Recreate your brainstorms or flash cards until you can write them from memory without notes. Listening to an audio recording whenever you have a spare two minutes. Go back to the memory test every so often and focus more on the things you always forget.

Tip:

Buy a small whiteboard or laminate a piece of paper so you can re-write information over and over without wasting paper. Alternatively, use an iPad.

Tip:

Stick to buzz words and bullet points. The point of revision is to spark your memory once you've learnt the information. Aim to be able to recollect more detail relating to a few keywords. This is useful towards the end of your revision process.

Reminders from Academic Learning Coaches

Stay hydrated and prepare snacks:

So you don't get hangry.

Know your weaknesses:

It can be easy to just revise the areas where you know you are knowledgeable rather than focus on areas where you struggle. However, these will be the areas you need to work on the most so focus on them.

Make your working environment appropriate:

Similar to how you will sit your exam - at a desk, in a quiet place, with a clock and without distractions.

Allow time for breaks:

Time your sessions (2 hours of work, 1 hour break or 30 minutes of work, 5 minute break). Take a break between learning each topic. Think realistically about how long you're productive for.

Figure out when you're most productive:

Are you a morning or evening person? After College or at lunch?

Leave your phone turned off or in another room:

If you work on a laptop, block distracting websites for a certain number of hours to make sure you concentrate.

If you need help or support, ask for it. Academic Learning Coaches, Tutors and Teachers all want you to succeed!

Weekly Revision Plan

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon	<i>You've got this!</i>		
Tues			<i>Early night?</i>
Wed		<i>Half way there!</i>	
Thur		<i>Lunch time!</i>	
Fri			<i>Treat yourself!</i>
Sat	<i>You deserve a lie in!</i>		
Sun			<i>Don't forget to take a break!</i>

