The 5-Step Study Cycle

1. Preview lecture, slides and readings; review notes from last lecture, gather note-taking supplies.
2. Stay focused, engage in discussions during lectures and ask questions. Take good notes.
3. Review and summarize all lecture notes within 24 hrs and look for points that need further clarification.
4. Create a study schedule. List out your study goals. Build in specific times to focus on more difficult material and time for shorter and longer breaks. Enter exam dates into a term calendar. Ask for help or clarification on material from professors, form study groups, create flashcards. Look for new ways to study smarter, not harder.
5. Review study plan and techniques, determine if another study method may be more effective.

Maximize Lecture Time

Step 1: Before – Prepare!
- Look over lecture slides, textbook readings, review past notes
- Bring the required or recommended textbook(s) to your lectures
- Be prepared for class! Bring items like printed lecture slides, a fully charged laptop, coloured pens or highlighters to take notes

Step 2: During – Stay Focused!
- Sit near the front to avoid distractions and stay focused on the professor
- Take meaningful notes. Jot down any questions that come to your mind
- Join in on class discussions and engage in both asking and answering questions
- Connect with at least one of your classmates
- Attend each lecture!
Step 3: After – Review!
- Review your lecture notes within 24 hours
- Summarize the material that was covered in lectures in your own words
- Identify spots in your notes where you missed information or could use some help
- Consolidate textbook readings with lecture notes - elaborate on material and fill in missing pieces

Get the Most from Your Study Time

Step 4: Study time - Throughout the week, organize your time & create goals!
- Start studying early to allow time for repetition and retrieval practice
- Create a study schedule using a weekly calendar or journal
- Develop your own strategic study sessions: create a goal, study, take a break, review and, repeat.
  Be sure to:
  - plan to study more difficult material during your peak time of focus in the day
  - schedule time for your physical, mental, emotional, and social needs
  - schedule longer breaks every couple of hours
  - look at online study skills resources
- Learn about different study techniques - study smarter, not harder
- Minimize distractions during study sessions (put your cell phone in another room)
- Look for extra help - talk to your professor, tutorial/lab instructor or peers
- Visit the Writing Help or Math and Stats Help centres
- Watch lecture recordings to fill in blanks or review concepts
- Solve textbook chapter questions and those given by your instructor

Step 5: Assess Mastery - How well do you understand the material? Are your study techniques and habits effective?
- Self-test in ALL ways that you can: use past exams, create your own questions, flash cards, mind maps
- Teach course material to your peers, friends or family
- Assess your knowledge against the course learning outcomes
- Regularly monitor your study approach, assessing your study techniques and adapting as needed
- Accept feedback on assignments and exam results as a way to focus your studies
- Did you attend all classes as well as complete marked and unmarked assignments or quizzes?

Sources: Frank Christ; Louisiana State University, Centre for Academic Success (2018)
Images: by Student Learning Services (2018)

Use Student Learning Services Tip Sheets: Further information to support the 5-Step Study Cycle

- **Before Class**: Academic Skills Checklist; Finding Success in University
- **During Class**: A Colourful Way to Learn Visually; Effective Note Taking Strategies
- **After Class**: Best Practices for Communicating with Your Prof
- **Study Time**: Creating a Schedule; A Guide to Goal Setting; Creating a Study Group; Study Tips for University Exams
- **Assessing Mastery**: Receiving Feedback; Post-Exam Self-Assessment; Study Skills Inventory Survey; Fixed or Growth Mindsets