

7 Habits of Successful Nursing Students

Habit 1: Manage Your Time

There's a reason this is the first habit to master: it's the most important! Balancing classes, studying, work, family obligations and a personal life takes some serious planning.

Break each day into blocks of time and then decide what's the most important thing for each block. For example, you know you need time to sleep. Will you manage to get eight hours every day? Or should you plan for seven? Proper sleep is the foundation for a healthy, stress-free nursing school experience, so don't skimp on it.

Schoolwork is the next important chunk for nursing school students. Tests, papers, and important assignments all require a certain amount of study time. Plan ahead and block out **sufficient study time every day**. Try not to let it get away from you.

Habit 2: Study Smart

Some people can cram for a test and make it work. **But in nursing, you really must understand the material and how to apply it in real-world situations.** You'll be using your reasoning skills to apply the right choices to different conditions, and not choosing between answers "A" or "B" on a test. That's why you need to study smart. Try these ideas to make your study time work more effectively for you:

- *Study effectively.* Don't spend four hours on something that should really take two. Try dividing a four-hour study block into four, one-hour study segments, and space them out a bit. You'll probably comprehend the material much better and finish faster.
- *Avoid distractions.* When you sit down to study, put away any books, materials, and devices that you don't need. Avoid the temptation to check your texts or social media.
- *Review classwork ahead of time.* Read through text before you get to class.
- *Practice.* When you finish a section of reading, run through some practice test questions. See if you can answer them without your notes.
- *Give yourself enough time.* Most students underestimate the amount of time it will take to finish an assignment, study, or write a paper. Be realistic.
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Habit 3: Ask for Help

- This is a tough one! For most of us, asking for help seems like a sign of weakness or failure, but it's not. Seek out someone who's been in your nursing shoes and can offer advice or just listen. They'll help you get through the difficult spots.

Habit 4: Focus

Now more than ever, nursing students are multi-tasking. It's so easy to get distracted by a message or alert and get way off track. The fact is that almost no one is good at multi-tasking. So, try to focus on one thing at a time. **Eliminate distractions by organizing your study space, and turn off your phone, TV, and music. When you focus on studying, you'll finish faster, leaving more time for catching up on social media and your favorite shows.**

Habit 5: Make Realistic Goals

Keep it real, and you'll be much more successful in reaching your goals. Sure, it would be great to study for eight hours over the weekend, but is it really possible? Can you aim for four and make that happen? How about setting daily goals like covering one major section and one smaller chapter? You'll feel better about yourself when you make and reach smaller goals along the way to the big goal – your BSN or MSN degree.

Habit 6: Be Proactive

Planning ahead and staying on top of your assignments will save you lots of time and prevent a rush to complete everything right before the end of the term. Also, take the initiative to ask questions of your instructors. Find out early about their standards and preferences, and you'll complete assignments right the first time.

Habit 7: Reward Yourself

With all the challenges of nursing school, it's not easy to do your best over the long haul. You will probably get tired of studying when you'd rather be spending time with your family or friends. That's when it's time to set a goal and reward yourself when you reach it. Getting into the habit of motivating yourself, controlling your behavior and doing something nice for yourself will take you far, both in nursing school and in your career.