I've made it so that people with the link can only view, since most of you are just accidentally pressing backspace. Every hour or so I had to reject up to 20 suggested changes.

(a,b, name1, name2) signals that this tip came from source “a” and source “b”, by people/users

named “name1”, and “name2”, There may also be additional sources that are acquaintances of mine. These will be italicised.

(name, “book name”) tips I’ve read about in books, if there is no name then I am just recalling some blog post I read from famous productivity and college performance authors. Sorry for vague sourcing.

## Introduction

My name is Derek Xiao, and I hail from San Diego, California, and will be attending UCLA as an Electrical Engineering major this coming fall. I was doing some internet research on study habits and came across a rather good quora thread (source 1), and decided I would compile some advice for myself and put it on the web.

This is really just list of tips for good study habits/mentality, it applies to everyone. Though it is much more important for people with heavy course loads to know and follow these tips.

Since working with an overloaded course load requires a bit more time, even if you are maximally efficient, you will have less time for extracurricular activities, recreational or not. This means a higher risk of burnout, which more or less permanently damaged the mentality of several quora commenters. Hence the section of tips titled preventing burnout

**If you leave this doc with just one thing, it would be “being curious” in the mentality section**.

## Case against a ultra heavy workload

* Risky due to **possibility of burnout,** which is said by a few to affect you for the rest of college. (1, Matt Hodel)
* **Depends on area of study and classes** 
  + a full course load in a notoriously difficult field like engineering will require much more discipline than a full course load in “”””underwater basket weaving”””” (1, Mikhel Patel)
  + Some classes are much easier or have a much lighter course load. Calc I vs Calc II, etc.
* **there is a lot you need to do first semester/quarter of college**:
  + find your comfort zone in college, find the right group of friends, figure out which clubs or organizations to join, establish good study habits that will allow you to take on a heavier courseload, socializing (ha. Ha. funny, yes, but you do not realize how diverse the people you meet at college will be), exercise, classes in the recreational center for gods sake (go learn how to do jeet kune do, or portrait drawing or something). You are here for an education, but it is also a four year investment of your short 70-80 year life (if even). make some memories, learn some recreational skills.
  + This is all made easier if you easy off and **take AT MOST 15 credit hours per semester**, since each class translates to 2-3 hours of homework outside of class. Which is in total 45-60 hours of your 84 waking hours (12 a day) where you aren’t eating, showering, commuting, or doing chores. (Brian Robbens, “How to College” advises to *never* take more than 15 credit hours) However, consider how difficult the courses that you are taking are, and if you’re in mostly introductory classes feel free to add something easy like a 101 core requirement. Future you may thank you for making senior year easier.
* **quality than quantity:** this tip got unanimous support on my facebook post, and will be supported almost wherever you look on the internet. This of course, implies that there is a trade off, which means extremely smart, efficient, or focused people can take more classes and still preserve quality. (4, almost all of the responses)
* **Make sure the knowledge lasts**: You are here for an education, not to get two majors on a piece of paper. True understanding is the result of reviewing what you have learned several times instead of cramming. This is difficult if you have too many classes (for example, you should do the reading before a lecture, take notes during the lecture, sit down and reorganize right after the lecture, review in one week, in one month, etc)
* **STEM industry cares much more about what you can do than how many classes you took**.

## Study tips for the brave adventurer

### Preventing Burnout

* Burnout is essentially chronic emotional and physical exhaustion. Note that in the grander scheme of your life, there is literally no meaning in an education where you destroy your chances of happiness in the rest of your life. The earlier you recognize these symptoms the easier it is to make changes to alleviate stress.
* **What is burnout?** 
  + [Short description](https://collegeinfogeek.com/student-burnout/)
  + [Long description](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/high-octane-women/201311/the-tell-tale-signs-burnout-do-you-have-them)
* **Do NOT stay up super late night after night** (1, Bjorn Wehlin, Meiri Anto)
  + Establish routine and don’t work after 10 (or similar time) (*Diego Majewski*).
  + Start the day early, if you get up at 7-8 and work the whole day when you don’t have classes, you should finish by dinnertime easily
* **Balance involvement with extracurriculars** (4)
  + You might want to join a ton of organizations due to the large variety. Realize that you’ll be in college for 3-4 years, you do not have to do them all at the same time.
* **Have fun**
  + Sounds silly, but taking a study break to visit a friend or exercise releases the positive energy that will allow you to hit the books harder. Most of us are human and cannot work 24/7. A good way to do this is to simultaneously work on a recreational physical skill that you enjoy. This way you exercise, learn a skill, and have fun all in a few hours. Your college’s recreational center should have quite a few classes.

### Study Habits

* **familiarize with the material BEFORE the lecture**, a common time to do this is the weekend before. (*Diego Majewski*, advice you will find anywhere, me)
  + This is so that the lecture is more of a review session for you. Taking notes during a lecture about something you know nothing about is not efficient, as you have to later figure out what your lecture notes even mean.
* **GO TO CLASS, PAY ATTENTION, AND TAKE NOTES**
  + Literally none of the other tips will really work if you do not go to class. My lack of emphasis on this advice was noted by some reddit users.
  + Textbooks are useful, but the teacher will test on what he emphasized, that’s what your notes are for. (5)
  + Teachers will often say in class. “This chapter will not be on the test”, or “study these concepts”. Not going to class means you forfeit these valuable tips, which will save you a lot of time. (Brian Robben, “how to College”)
* **Review after the lecture**: (3, furielrage)
  + review/re-read my notes after class (3, nshah9617)
  + **Reviewing strategies** 
    - pay full attention in class and take attentive notes so that you make more connections when you're reviewing the material, which you should **do at least once a week** if you can't manage to do it everyday. (3, electrifice)

### Study Tips

* **Convince the person grading you that you earned an A**, regardless of the quality of your work. (Reddit, Core\_Four)
  + [full reddit thread here](https://www.reddit.com/r/college/comments/6prvn4/i_created_a_google_doc_with_6_pages_of_tips_on/)
  + Obviously, the best way to do this is by producing high quality work, but “this is the single greatest piece of advice I have for people going into Humanities/Social Sciences”. (Reddit, Core\_Four)
  + “Professors want the students they like to succeed. So don't be a dick, show up to office hours, make it look like you put in the effort, etc.   
    Goes with the general saying... dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Perception is part of how you're judged and when you're in college, the professors are the judge and jury in your trial.”
* **Active reading**
  + Read table of contents, graphs, and pictures first, then read the chapter, this way you have a general idea of the logical progression of the book, which enhances comprehension. (5)
  + Be an active reader who continually asks questions that lead to a full understanding of the author’s message (5)
  + This reminds me very much of a guide I wrote for myself on how to write book reports when reading non fiction self help type books. [Check it out if you want](https://drive.google.com/open?id=15OiNq0Vit-zThzKls_NOSC3NI_zfUPp3fifNcLeKIRo)
* **Preferably take notes on paper rather than laptop**
  + Do a google search yourself. Plenty of sources.
* **recording lectures is not recommended**, for several reasons outlined in source [5](https://www.universitylanguage.com/blog/28/the-pros-and-cons-of-recording-college-lectures/). There are 3 pros on the website:
  + Pro 1: you will not be distracted by your laptop when you’re taking notes. This is a moot point, since if you took my previous tip, you’d be taking notes on paper.
  + Pro 2: focus on facts themselves rather than how many there are: I concede that for fact/memorization type classes, taking notes might not be the most efficient way of learning due to how rapidly information is presented.
  + Pro 3: teacher just happens to explain things brilliantly. This is the only legitimate reason I can see for recording lectures. Make sure school policy does not prohibit it.
* **Do not fall behind on classes** (1, Meiri Anto)
  + **Pay attention and make sure you understand everything in the lecture**
    - If not, do some reading or ask the prof. Patch up understanding IMMEDIATELY (WITHIN 48 HOURS), you don’t want to realize on finals week that you don’t understand ⅓ of the material
  + **Go to office hours** (1, Meiri Anto)
    - Make sure you are free during the professor’s office hours for harder classes that are comprehension based. Memorization classes are entirely up to you.
    - Make sure you have legitimate questions that do not waste the professor’s time, or they will begin to dislike you for wasting their time. If you ask good questions, they will begin to know you as the kid who goes to office hours a lot, and if you make the effort, you may gain a valuable resource for a good **letter of rec**, and **internships** in the future.
* **Taking old tests**
  + For tests, see if your school has older tests on file to study from. I find this helpful for some classes more than others. The older tests give you a feel for what types of questions to expect on the exam (self confidence when taking an exam is worth a lot) and alert you to subject areas you may need to study more before taking the test. (3, mo24)
* **No cell phones next to you while working** (6)
  + There is nothing worth going on your phone. If you think an important call is coming, leave your phone out of reach but in hearing range.
  + If you are worried about messages, **check during your work breaks**, you do not need to instantly reply to messages. Anyone who gets mad at you for not
  + responding instantly even after you explain that you are working is not worth being your friend. (6)
  + Honestly you just shouldn’t be spending much time on your phone at all if you’re going for such a heavy course load.

### Time Management

* **Get organized and DO NOT CRAM** (2) (Cal Newport)
  + make a plan on how to divide your time between all classes. (2)
    - **Find your most productive hours** and make sure you only use them for studying or homework. (3, electrifice)
    - **Start the day with your important work** (6)
      * Instead of wasting time looking at your phone or checking social media the moment you get up, make your mornings productive and study.
  + **split tasks into manageable chunks** (work for small set intervals of time and take breaks) (5)
    - Split essays into 3 day chunks or more. 1: consider what you want to convey, outline the essay, 2: write for a set amount of time, 2 or 3 hours, 3: write for the same set amount of time 2 or 3 hours, finish the essay. If you did not sidetrack, other than short breaks every hour (preferably not social media checks), you should be done by the third or fourth day. Aim for finishing by the third day. For essays that require research, do so on the first day, the rest is the same. (Brian Robbens, “How to College”)
* **Create a priority list**
  + make sure the things you are spending time on make sense. (Brian Robben, “How to College)
    - Ie, you think getting an internship is much higher priority than playing intramural sports, yet all of your time outside of studying is spent playing sports. Cut some off, visit the career center, talk to advisors and professors instead.
* **Save a time slot every day for studying** (5)
  + You’ll see in my doc that I am a fan of forming habits. Read a book called “The Power of Habit” for good information on this. If you form this habit, studying will seem like the natural thing to do at that time slot each day.
* **Get organized:**
  + Make sure you never have to search for things, or have to clean up for hours before someone visits your room.
  + Daily habit to clean 5 minutes a day (Brian Robbens, “How to College”)
  + Organize your files somehow so you can find things without wasting time. Do your own research for this.

### Exercise

* Running and moderate endurance workouts lead to the most neurogenesis in the brain according to this [research](https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/02/17/which-type-of-exercise-is-best-for-the-brain/?_r=0).
  + Do this at least twice a week, though preferably once every two days.
  + Honestly I suggest just picking up some sort of recreational physical activity like rock climbing or martial arts. That way, you develop a fun/practical skill while working out at the same time.

### Mentality

* Perseverance and Diligence
  + The number one thing that leads to good grades is perseverance, meaning that you have to keep up your performance for the ENTIRE quarter/semester. This is a rather abstract tip…. Feel free to expand upon this.
* **Being Curious**: **If I want you to leave this doc with anything, this is it.** 
  + Interest in a subject definitely translates to better performance to some extent, and *definitely* leads to you enjoying the subject more while in the class, but possibly even for the rest of your life. Here is a good description of [interest](https://www.quora.com/How-do-you-develop-a-genuine-interest-in-something-you-have-no-interest-in) as a conscious choice, by Flemming Funch, and how to cultivate it.
  + I have pasted the answer below, because I feel like many people are too lazy to click the link:  
     “If you're "not interested" in a subject, chances are that you're not really looking at it. You're looking at a mental image, an abstraction of what you think the subject is about. It is usually not only cartoonishly over-simplified, it is also most likely very wrong.  
     You might think that the wall next to you is very uninteresting. You might just think of it as "a wall" or "a white wall", if you even think about it. And you might think you already know all about it. "It's a white wall! What more is there to say?". But if you actually were perceiving, dealing with the real wall, instead of thinking about a picture of it, there would probably be plenty of things to be interested in on that wall. There are many shades of colors, patterns of shadows, textures, and it has a certain feel to the touch, a temperature. It has a history, it was constructed by people. It has a future. If you were thinking as an artist, you might get a lot out of that simple wall.  
     The thing is, if you really look, listen, feel, get in touch with the subject matter, you can go deeper. And deeper and deeper. You will learn new things, you will discover a part of the world that you didn't know existed.  
     Interest is not something you have or don't have. It is an action. It is something you do, as you're looking at the subject matter. Your interest itself will reveal something interesting about it. It is not about faking interest, as in "Oh, that is very interesting!", if you don't mean it. It is about perceiving, with interest, what is in front of you. And, possibly, getting over any preconceived ideas you had about it, which had kept you from actually perceiving it honestly before.  
     If you're really paying attention, you can always go deeper, continuously. If you do, new worlds open for you.”

End.

## Sources

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