

Super Charge Your Education!

WHEN YOUR GRADES START TO SLIP

Don't Let Discouragement Win

1. **Name it.** Recognize you are discouraged and it's keeping you from making progress.
2. **Talk it out with someone you trust.** Find a friend, pastor, or teacher you trust and talk about your discouragement.
3. **Get over your fear of failure.** Everyone experiences failure. The real failure is in not trying and learning from the attempt. Plus, everyone (including teachers) appreciate effort!
4. **Let it go.** Realize discouragement doesn't control your life and let it go. Don't let it stop you from accomplishing the suggestions on this help sheet!

"Discouragement is waging a war against our minds. No matter how much we achieve and the amount of progress we make, it always tries to infiltrate our defenses. In the absence of alternatives, we freeze up. Progress halts. We accept that whatever it was we were working toward simply wasn't meant to be."

— Andy Andrews
NY Times bestselling author

Attend Class

It is SO tempting to skip classes! The class is boring, or worse, confusing. It's too early in the morning, and you were up late studying. You didn't do the homework or reading for class. You would much rather hang out with friends. You can get the notes from a classmate later, anyway.

Do you regularly skip class? If so, and I say this with all discretion, you're weak. Attending class is your primary responsibility as a college student. If you can't handle this small little piece of self-control, requiring, at most, a few hours of your time a day, then how can you expect to muster the discipline required to become an efficient, engaged, high-scoring student? Beyond the general wussyness of side-stepping the lecture hall is the practical reality that every hour of missed class will require 2 – 3 hours of copying notes, bothering your friends, and reading to learn the information from scratch. Plus, you will be tested on material covered in class and textbook material explained and/or applied in class. How can you do well on a test when you've missed out entirely on some of the material? Attend class. Always. Make this non-negotiable.

— Cal Newport, *NY Times bestselling author*

Tap into Community

Being isolated is de-motivating. Also, when we do not get to know and spend time with classmates and teachers, we lack support and a place to go for ideas and answers when a problem does arise. Get to know your classmates and exchange contact information. Find a group of friends who are serious about their studies and form a study group. Reach out to a teacher or staff member you trust for a mentoring relationship.

Spend Some of Your Most Valuable Resource--Time

College is a new level of freedom and responsibility, and sometimes the two conflict. It is easy to shortchange the necessary reading and studying, and that can have a negative impact on grades. Remember that if you are a full-time student, you should be spending 36 hours a week in college activities (12 hours of class + 24 hours of homework, reading, and studying). If you are not spending at least 3-4 hours a day studying and doing homework, you need to step it up.

Stop Multitasking



The truth is that "multitasking" doesn't exist. The human brain can only consciously focus on one thing at a time. Put away your phone and focus on reading your course materials for 10 minutes straight before doing anything else. The next day, it can be 15 minutes, and then 30, and then an hour. This way you can retrain your brain to have a longer attention span.

References

- Andrews, A. (2017). *How to overcome discouragement and live the life you were made to live*. <https://www.andyandrews.com/overcome-discouragement/>
- Newport, C. (2007). *Study Hacks Blog: Monday master class: 5 bad study habits you should resolve to avoid in 2008*. <https://www.calnewport.com/blog/2007/12/31/monday-master-class-5-bad-study-habits-you-should-resolve-to-avoid-in-2008/>
- Purdue University, Fort Wayne. (2020). *Common problems for students*. <https://www.pfw.edu/offices/family-outreach/for-parents-from-sap/commonproblemsforstudents.html>
- Stassinopoulos, A. (2013). The antidote to discouragement: 6 steps to get past it. *Huffington Post*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/discouragement-tips_b_3071687
- Twenge, J. M. (2018). What's the biggest challenge for colleges and universities? *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/05/education/learning/biggest-challenge-for-colleges-and-universities.html>