



Educating The Teenage Brain

*A **Parent's Guide** To
Raising Thriving Scholars*



William
Wadsworth
RGS Y8 Parents

Studying Smarter (Not Harder)



How should they study?
What can I do to help?

Mindset Mastery: Raising Champions



Finding the balance:
how much to work?
Mindset for success

Healthy Habits For Successful Scholars



Smartphone management
Creating a **study-friendly space**
Are they **getting enough sleep**
and how to help?

Every family is different: some
guiding principles to empower you
 to support your child as is **right for**
them – and for you!

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Research 

Workshops 

1:1 Coaching 

 **EXAM STUDY
EXPERT**

Ace your exams by studying **smarter not harder**

Podcast **Blog** **Book**

1,000,000
Students
reached / year

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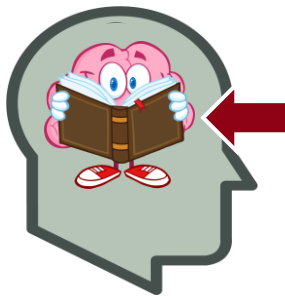


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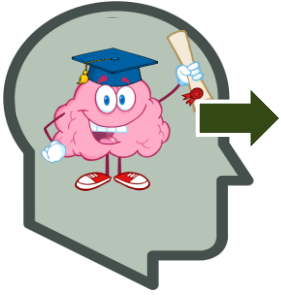
Two options when learning

The long way:



Pushing information "into memory"

The smart way



Retrieval practice: testing yourself

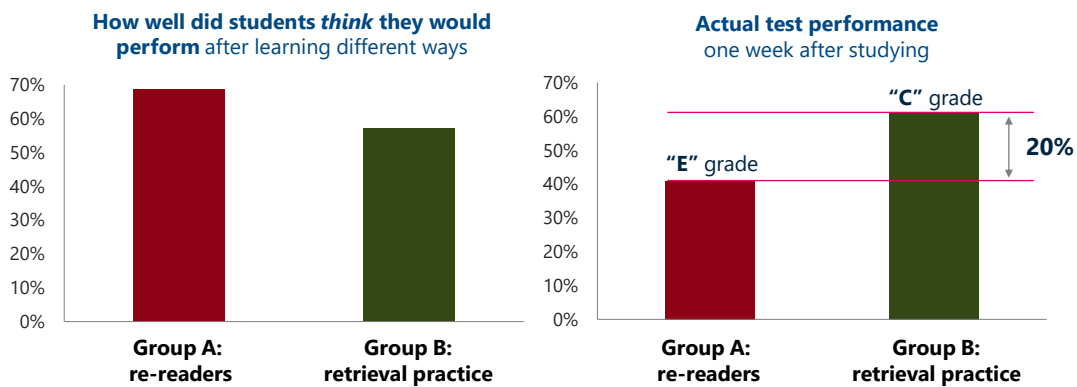
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The power (and the challenge!) of retrieval practice



What we *think* "works for me" isn't always what **ACTUALLY** works best for us

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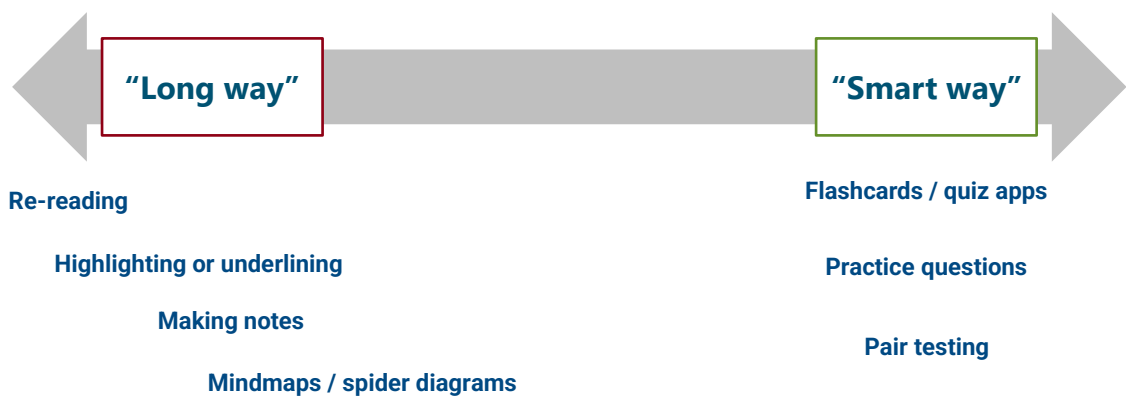


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Roediger & Karpicke, 2006



What techniques are effective?



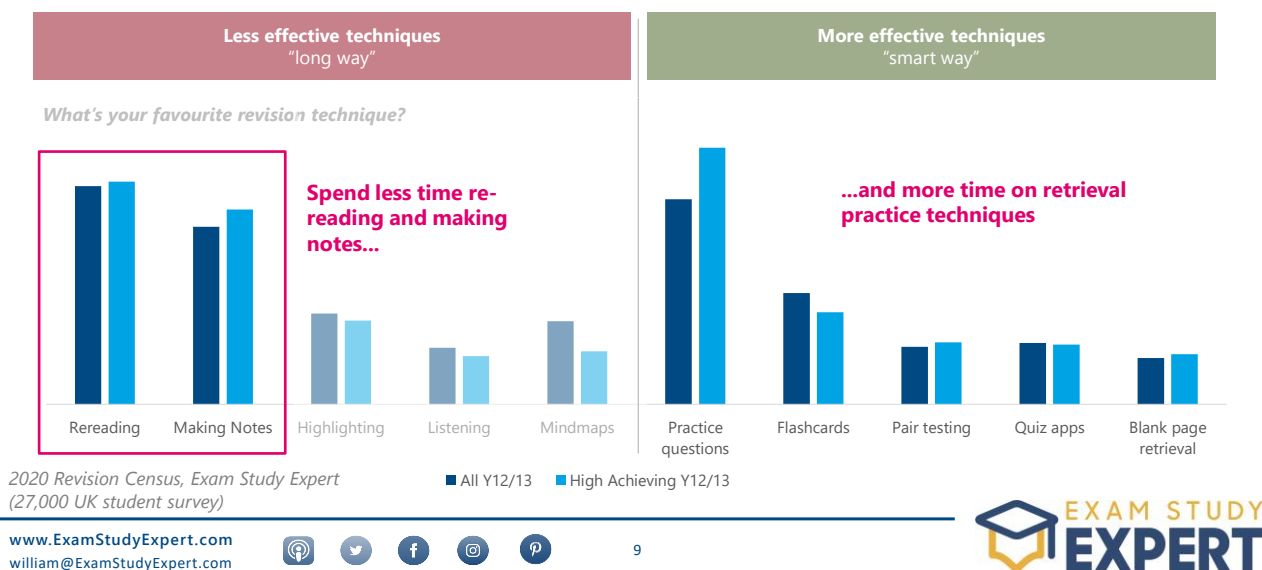
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For better results with less study time:



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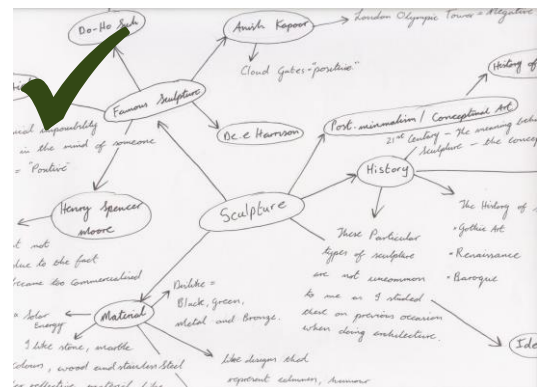
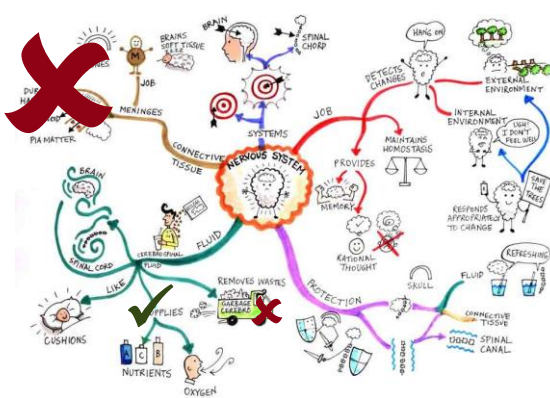
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What good revision technique LOOKS like from the outside: any notes are functional not beautiful, and ideally made from memory



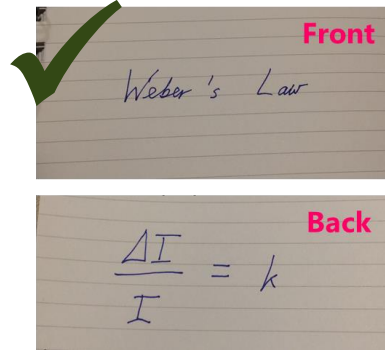
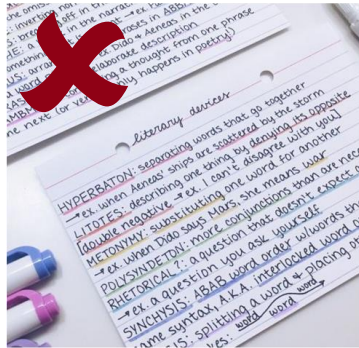
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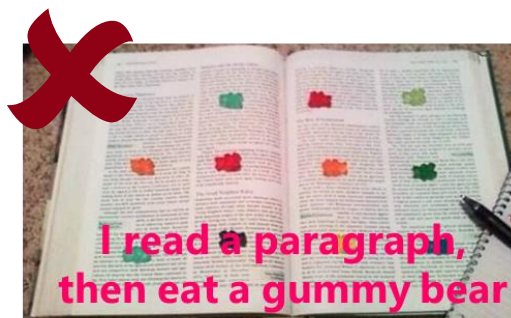
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What good revision technique LOOKS like from the outside:
flashcards are made fast (save time for testing!), with clear front / back



What good revision technique LOOKS like from the outside:
re-reading is kept to a minimum :-)



Getting involved in good revision technique as “tester”

Question
number

1

2

3

2

4

5

6

2

Did they get
the answer
right?



“Tester” should:

1. **Give feedback** to help you learn from your mistakes
2. **Revisit questions you got wrong** more than once

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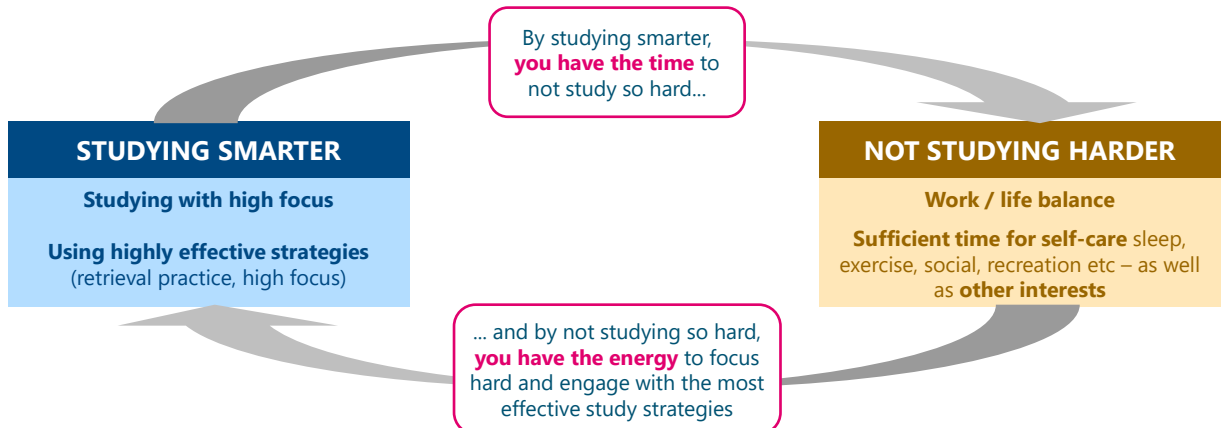
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Studying smarter, not harder: my core approach at Exam Study Expert, a philosophy in two interconnected halves



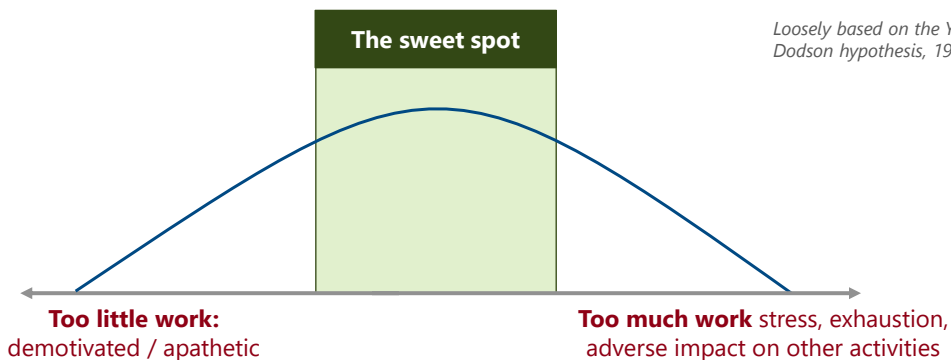
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So as with most things in life, there's a sweet spot



No "one size fits all" – every child is different, and what's right for your child will change over time. Trust your parental instincts, as well as the feedback from their teachers.

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Your abilities are not fixed. You CAN change.

Robin Ruzan
Before instruction
May 16, 2011



After instruction
May 20, 2011

Coaching a growth mindset – correlates with academic success

Instead of...

"I'm not good at maths"

"This is too difficult"

"I don't like to be wrong / to fail"

"I messed up"

Say...

"I'm not good at maths **yet**"

"This may take some **thought and effort**"

"Challenges **help you to grow**"

"What was this experience **designed to teach you?**"

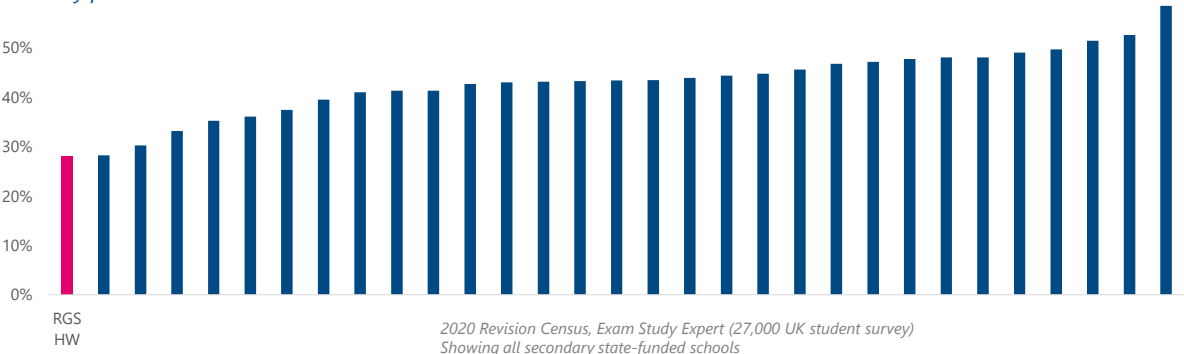
"**What can you learn** from this?"

Praise progress, and praise effort, even if it resulted in a disappointing outcome (this time)

If the outcome was good, praise the effort that went into achieving it (not their gifts / talent)

Our data suggests your son is in a very good place at RGS when it comes to developing mindset and resilience..!

Standard measure of resilience (school average – lower is better!)
"When the work gets difficult, how likely are you to give up or only study the easy parts?"



2020 Revision Census, Exam Study Expert (27,000 UK student survey)
Showing all secondary state-funded schools

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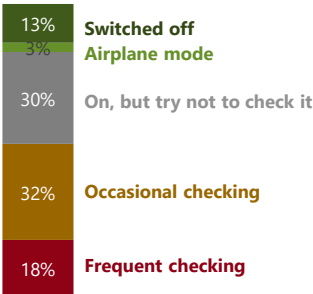


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8 in 10 UK students risk serious distraction during
homework from their phones

What are you doing with your
phone while doing homework?



Studies show students who are **distracted**
by technology lose an average of

8 mins

for every hour of study time

2020 Revision Census, Exam Study Expert
(27,000 UK student survey)

Patterson, 2016

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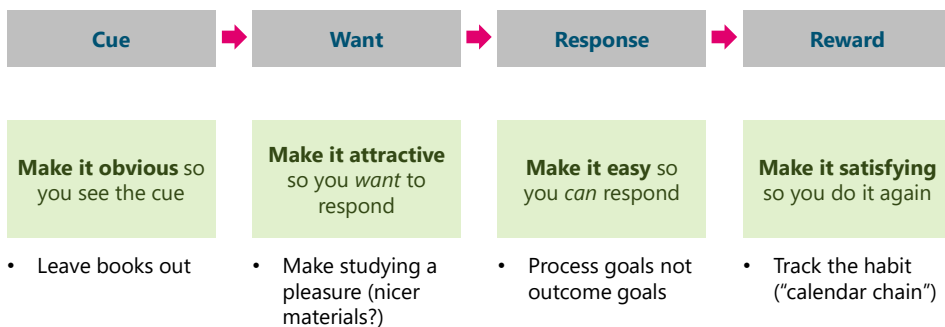
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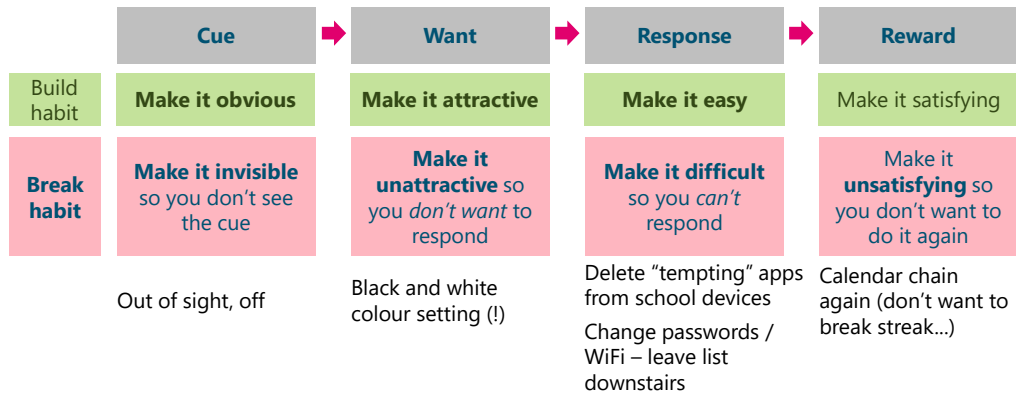
How animals (inc. human teenagers!) form habits



How to build good habits



... And how to break bad ones (smartphones!)



+ power of leading by example...!

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Setting them up for success: what's in their study space?



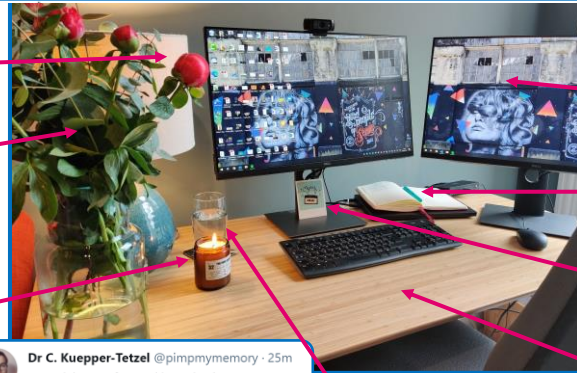
William Wadsworth @examstudyexpert · May 6

Here's how a learning scientist sets up her desk when it's time to get the marking DONE.

Lamp: supplements natural / overhead lighting

Fresh flowers: to soothe and cheer

Candle: "Rose garden" scent – more nature / calm vibes



Dual-monitor set-up: to see more and do more

Notepad / pen: at the ready

The personal touch

Clear desk: clear mind

H2O: to stay hydrated



Dr C. Kuepper-Tetzel @pimpmymemory · 25m

Essential setup for marking: Check! Let's do this! 📝💻

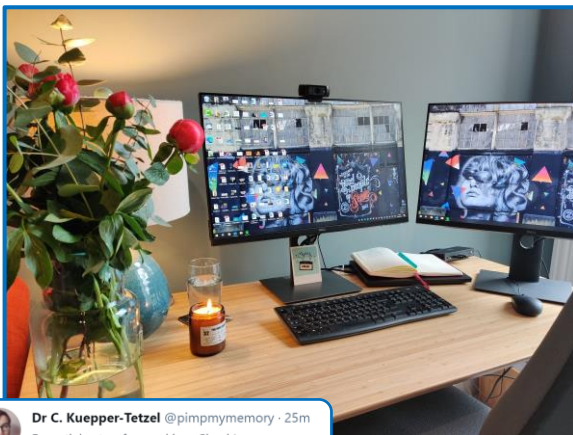
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Setting their space up for success: top tips



Dr C. Kuepper-Tetzel @pimpmymemory · 25m

Essential setup for marking: Check! Let's do this! 📝💻

- **Work, play and rest are compartmentalised:** even if that's just a dedicated corner / end of their desk for studying (no working in bed!)
 - **Distraction-free:** esp. technology – but also other humans!
- Vs
- **Visible** if their self-drive and task-focus is still maturing!
 - **Well lit, comfortable etc.**

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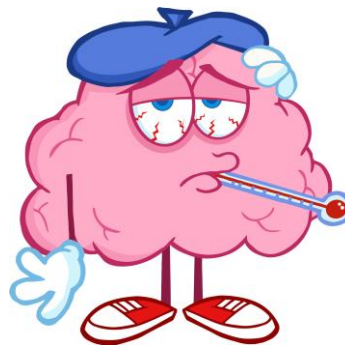


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A sleep deprived brain is a sick brain...

- ↓ Less able to concentrate
- ↓ Worse at paying attention
- ↓ Less able to solve problems
- ↓ Less creative
- ↓ Less able to form new memories



Not a set of handicaps anyone wants when studying! So how to get those 8-10 hours in?

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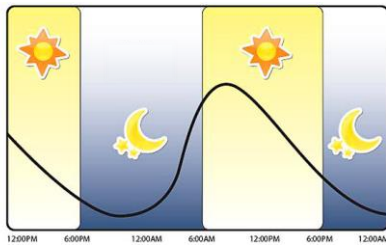


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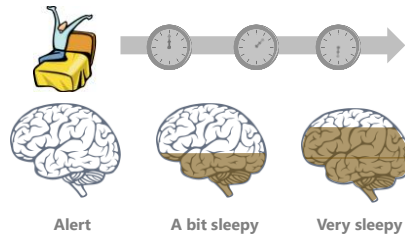
The two systems that make you feel sleepy, and the science of a good night's sleep as a teenager

1. The day / night cycle (circadian rhythm)



A **good sleep routine**, with regular bedtime.
Sunlight can help you adjust.
No phones before bed.

2. The "sleep signal" (adenosine)



Avoid **caffeine**, **naps** and **exercise** too late in the day

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Top takeaways: DOs and DON'Ts for studying smart

DO... use retrieval practice

DO... remember that their brain literally grows when they train it

DO... help give them the time and space to put in the work

so DON'T just re-read or make notes – no matter how beautiful they look

so DON'T let them say "I can't" (say I can't ... YET")

but DON'T forget there's a balance: rest, sleep and even fun are also important!

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Extra resources: listen to the Exam Study Expert podcast



"Really helped me!"
Helena, US



"Tips which REALLY worked!"
FJTapner, UK



"Awesome"
Charlie Boy, UK



"Utterly impressed"
Ruby7, Australia



"Clear & motivational!"
Rwarman, UK



"You are a god"
Rose, Australia

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Let's stay in touch



Questions? Want to share?

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Wishing them every success!