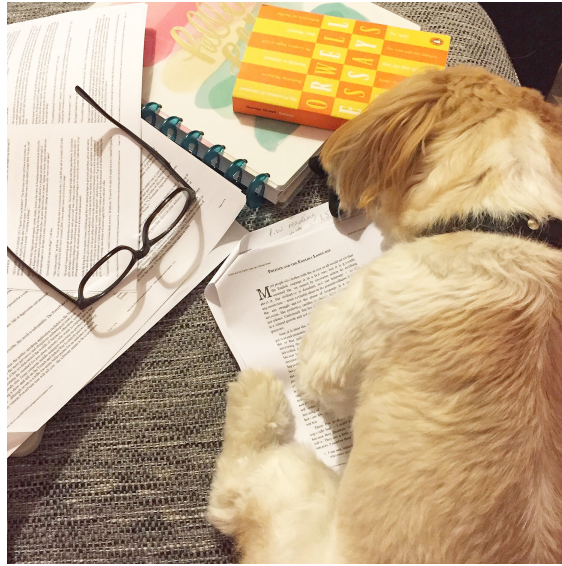


8 tips for studying

The second semester of the year has begun here in Australia (somehow I am already in week 4 at uni- how did that happen?!), and I know in other countries the new study year is fast approaching. So I thought I would put a few ideas down about how to deal with studying. These are particularly taking in account those of us with chronic illnesses, but can be



useful for everyone!

- 1. Find a time to study that works for you.** Personally, for some strange reason, my brain often functions better at night. It's not always the case, but when it is, I can get some productive work done. This then means the need for a sleep in, on top of the already extended time it takes me to get going due to my health. My family are very understanding, so luckily for me, this works and I am able to study at night and sleep in. This goes against the normal 'get an early night and be productive in the morning' advice. However, it is what I have found to be useful. You need to find what works and make the most of that, and don't worry about how other students are doing it (including the infamous all-nighter cram sessions – if that does not suit your body, don't do it!).

- 2. Similarly, find a routine (or an ability to be flexible) that works for you.** I am a planner and a list maker, but I have to listen to my body. I can't say 'work on such and such

from 12-2 pm tomorrow', because I may feel unwell at that time. What I do is each night I write out the things I hope to get done the next day, and then I do small amounts of what is on that list in the moments I can. Even if I only do ten minutes work and then go and rest, it gets the work done eventually. And I've had to learn to not beat myself up when I don't get everything done on the list, and add it to the list for the next day.

3. Make your workspace as suitable for you as possible. I can not sit in one position for too long because of my health, so I change the areas I work in. I have a recliner chair that allows me to adjust my sitting position regularly, and I have a quiet reading nook with a comfy couch that lets me sit up, place my legs up on a foot rest, or lie down, and I have a table that I can sit at. Sometimes I even lie on my bed and rest while working. It may seem strange to have more than one workspace, but it helps me get work done while taking into account my body's needs. You may need a huge space to spread out on, depending on your field, or you may just need a laptop. You may work best in bright spaces with background noise, or you may find that your environment has to be as zen as possible. Play around and do your best to make the most of your setting.

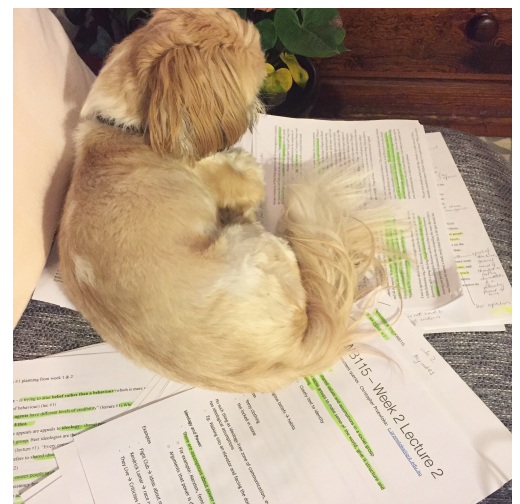
4. Decide what kind of learner you are. If you are a visual person, writing notes up with colours and diagrams and pinning them to your wall might be useful. Perhaps making cards with your notes so that you can have them with you and read them out loud to yourself will work. Listening to the lecture recordings several times might be the way for you. Studying in groups or with a partner might be productive. Brainstorming and making a framework for essays might be helpful, or throwing all your thoughts down and then breaking them into relevant sections might be best.

5. Drink plenty. Eat regularly. Move around. Stretch. Rest. Whatever you can do within your health needs or limitations to

try to keep your body functioning as well as possible, do that!

6. Ask for help. My university is great with support. I see a disability advisor at the start of every semester and we set up a plan that involves easy applications for extensions when I need them, understanding from the tutors when I need to do something such as move about in class, getting notes for each class from a fellow student to take the pressure off me while listening to the tutors and lecturers etc. Find out how your place of study can help you and make the most of it. I am also blessed because my mum is AWESOME. She drives me to classes, is on call if I need to leave early, makes me dinners, shops for food, and does so many other day to day things, which means that I can use my little energy concentrating on studying and going to classes. I know not everyone is as lucky as me to have that, but if someone is offering to help, learn to say yes and thank you, as hard as it is, because it makes such a difference. Just be sure to tell them how much it means to you! (I LOVE you Mum!! You're the bee's knees!)

7. If you have an assignment due, tell yourself it's due a few days earlier and work to that day. This allows for interruptions and delays and increases the chance that you will be less stressed when the due date rolls around and you can get it in on time.



8. Be proud of yourself. Studying, no matter whether you're as healthy as can be or dealing with health complications that make it difficult, is hard work and you are amazing for giving it a go. Being proud of yourself will keep you going and remind you why you're doing it all. Learning is rewarding and

fun, and in the end, you gain so much from it.

Do you have any other tips for studying? Are you starting a new course soon, or are you well into it? What are you studying? Let me know! Now go and put your head down and squeeze some new facts into that beautiful brain of yours!