Habits of an Excellent Learner

Basically, Habits of an Excellent Learner is a process that makes it easier for our brains to perform and learn. When we consistently apply the skills and strategies we learned at SuperCamp, they soon become habits. They’re automatic, they occur subconsciously, and we don’t have to constantly remind ourselves of each step in the process. When you develop effective habits, your learning will become easier, and much more productive, so start practicing as many of these skills as possible—and make your learning more mindful, meaningful, and effective.

Here are the habits of an excellent learner:

**Prepare:** Get your space ready. Get your stuff ready. Be clear: What by when?

**Get in State:** Q-Up! (pull up & picture, breathe & release)

**Prime your Mind:** Review your notes and content posters, super-scan articles

**Do the 1 Thing:** Keep your focus on the topic

**Make it Stick:** Use your strategies, take brain breaks, use music, review using 10-24-7-10, create content posters to hang around the room

Now let’s go a little deeper.

1) **Prepare**

This first step is about preparing to learn—getting our space ready, getting our stuff ready, and getting our goal ready with a clear picture of the task we’re preparing for.

- **Get your space ready.** We can do our brains a big favor before we begin a task by clearing all other potential attention-grabbers from our environment. This might look like clearing screens and loose papers from our work area before reading at home. Or it might look like making sure we have our shoes tied and hair out of our face before a big game. We need to ask ourselves *What in my environment could be grabbing at my attention? How can I change my environment to eliminate that distraction?*

- **Get your stuff ready.** Probably most of us at some time or another have sat down to work on a task, then proceeded to get up repeatedly when we realized we needed a book we left in our backpack downstairs, or we can’t find our favorite pen, or any number of similar distractions that take us away from the task at hand. Our brains work best when they can focus for long periods without interruptions, and we create better conditions for this focus by gathering everything we need before we get started.

- **Be clear. What by when?** Once we’ve set up our space and our stuff, we get our head ready by answering the questions *What? and By when?* Our brains love to be given a clear outcome to work toward and a specific timeline for making it happen. Before we start the task, we need to have a specific goal. We need a clear picture of what exactly we want to accomplish, and when we want to accomplish it. What is the *thing* I plan to do and what is my exact timing for doing it?

2) **Get in State**

This next step relates to shifting our internal environment. Without this step we may find it difficult to concentrate because of all those unrelated thoughts and emotions that keep popping into our head.
The most powerful strategy for shifting to alpha state—the relaxed, focused state that is optimal for learning—is Q-Up! All we need to remember for getting into state is pull up & picture, breathe & release.

3) Prime your Mind

Our brains are better at taking in new information when they can connect it to what they already know. A brain-friendly strategy, then, when we’re starting a task is to first ask ourselves questions such as What do I already know about this topic? If we’re writing a paper or doing a project, this might look like reviewing our notes or skimming through previous research we’ve done to refresh our memory.

Once we’ve brainstormed what we know, we can brainstorm what information we still need to seek out. We can ask ourselves questions like What else is out there on this topic? Who are the experts? Are there any other connections I can make?

In priming our mind, we use SuperCamp strategies such as the brainstorming Creative Discovery Process, mind maps, as well as super-scan when we sit down to read new material, so brush up on all these strategies from previous Refreshers, and practice them until they become habits!

4) Do the 1 Thing

Now our number one task is to maintain our focus on the topic. We live in a pretty distracting world. There are screens and sounds and voices all around us, all pulling at our attention. That’s why so many of us multitask . . . we’re afraid we’ll miss what’s happening in the group text, so we keep checking, even when we’re in the middle of an important assignment. One of the most important things we learned at SuperCamp is this: Our working memory, our attention, can only really hold on to one thought at a time. So if we’re having a conversation and texting, there’s no such thing as giving both tasks our full attention at the same time. Our attention has to drop one task to hold on to the other.

When we prime our mind in previous step in this process, we tend to shift our attention frequently as we move between asking questions and gathering information. Doing all of this attention-shifting work up front allows us to focus fully and engage creatively with the information when we start on our task.

5) Make it Stick

This step is mostly about review, one of the most important strategies we can use to make content meaningful and make it stick! At SuperCamp we learn several tools for reviewing new content like Notes:TM, Mind Mapping, 10-24-7-10, content posters, and theta scanning. Refresh your memory about any of these skills you may not be using and try to make them part of your learning every day. Also remember to take brain breaks and use music to enhance your learning!

And now you’re ready to make all your learning easier. Make it a habit and you’ll excel!