Neurodivergent Study Strategies

Focus and Attention Strategies

For individuals with ADHD, sensory sensitivities, or executive functioning challenges:

- The Pomodoro Technique: Study for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. Use a timer to stay on track.
    - Tool: Pomodoro Timer
- Body Doubling: Study alongside someone (in-person or virtually) to maintain focus and reduce procrastination.
    - Tool: Virtual study groups on Discord or Focusmate
- Environment Customization: Adjust your workspace for optimal focus. Consider noise-canceling headphones or calming background sounds.
    - Tool: Noisli (Custom ambient sounds)
        - Free service- just need to sign up by entering email and creating password

Comprehension and Memory Strategies

For those who benefit from visual aids or hands-on learning:

- Visual Learning: Use mind maps, color-coded notes, or infographics to structure information visually.
    - Tool: MindMeister (Mind mapping software)
        - Free service- can use your google account to sign up
    - Tool: XMind
        - Downloadable app
- Chunking Information: Break study material into smaller sections to reduce overwhelm. Focus on one chunk at a time.
- Teach-Back Method: Explain what you've learned to someone else (or pretend to) to deepen understanding.

Sensory-Friendly Study Approaches

For individuals with sensory processing differences:

- Movement Breaks: Incorporate physical activity between study sessions to release excess energy.

- Flexible Study Spaces: Use a quiet, dimly-lit, or low-stimulation environment if sensory overload is an issue.
- Fidget Tools: Use fidget items (e.g., stress balls, textured objects) to support focus while studying.

Memory and Recall Techniques

For those who struggle with working memory or information retention:

- Spaced Repetition: Review material at increasing intervals for long-term retention.
    - Tool: Anki (Spaced repetition software)
        - Not web-based; must install on your computer
- Mnemonics and Acronyms: Create mnemonics or rhymes to remember lists or complex ideas.
- Multisensory Input: Combine reading with listening (e.g., read aloud while reviewing).
    - Tool: NaturalReader (Text-to-speech)
        - Free service- no email needed to use

Executive Function and Organization

For those who experience time management and planning challenges:

- Task Batching: Group similar tasks (e.g., reading, problem-solving) to minimize mental switching.
- Visual Schedules: Use visual planners or digital calendars with reminders.
    - Tool: Monday (Task manager with reminders)
        - Free and paid plans- unlimited use on free plan
- Backward Planning: Start from your deadline and plan study milestones backward.

Community and Support

For those who thrive on connection and peer encouragement:

- Study Buddies: Pair with a peer for mutual accountability.
- Online Study Sessions: Join virtual coworking spaces to study in community.
    - Tool: Study Together (24/7 virtual study rooms)
        - Free service