

How Can You Improve Your Learning Skills?

Written by Diana Spector
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Learning skills is an amorphous term that really refers to a large array of skills. Having good learning skills is vitally important because it often separates those who can learn new information quickly from those who cannot. In school this often means that those students with good learning skills quickly outpace their fellow students who lack those skills. In the work place, good learning skills can be what separates you from promotion from your co-workers. Luckily, learning skills can be developed and improved by anybody.

In school it is likely you were given some cursory instruction in learning skills but probably not at a very advanced level. It's unfortunate that it is often overlooked because these skills can help you throughout your entire life, not just in school. First, let's figure out what exactly "learning skills" refer to.

Learning skills refer to the group of skills and abilities that help you take new information and assimilate it into your understanding for everyday use. So, it refers to the way you study, commit new information to memory, and challenge yourself through your own personal development.

The first way you can improve your learning skills is to take some time out of each day to commit to improving yourself. Schedule time each day to commit to personal development in the same way that you would schedule an appointment. This time is sacred for you to improve yourself. Treat it with the same respect that you would treat any other appointment.

Once you have this sacred period of 30 minutes, an hour, or however long you can afford to schedule, let's make sure we use it wisely. Turn off anything that may distract you such as text message notifications, instant message notifications, incoming emails, phone calls, and the T.V. This is time for you to gather your mental energy and focus it on the goal of learning — not being distracted.

Once you are distraction free, pick one task to focus on for a small amount of time. You want to tackle the various tasks you set for yourself in a singular manner. Multi-tasking requires you to switch mental gears too often. Switching between multiple projects or distractions can derail the focus you need to get anything done.

You could use this time to read books that you've been meaning to get to for awhile, or catch up with correspondence, or tackle personal projects of any nature. Learning skills is a very broad phrase that can encompass nearly any aspect of self improvement. If you're interested in learning more about a specific subject, there is likely to be an absolute plethora of resources that you can find on the internet. There are university lectures and classes available for free at places like MIT OpenCourseWare and iTunes U. Podcasts are available that cover every single topic that you can possibly think of. Many scholarly journal databases are free to search as well as online newspapers like the New York Times. If you're interested in a topic, you can find information on it if you spend a few minutes looking for it.

Really, learning skills are built on the ability to focus on one thing at a time for a set amount of time. Distractions have become such a way of life for most people that most of us have

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forgotten what it's like to focus and concentrate on one thing at a time. It will be difficult at first but I think you will see that the amount you are able to learn and the quality of the work you produce will far outweigh what you used to do in your old distracted state.