How to Make Studying a Habit

Based on the book "Atomic Habits" by James Clear

Small habits don't just add up. They compound.
Tiny changes → Remarkable results.

True behavior change is identity change. Your habits are how you embody your identity. Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you want to become. Want to be a good student? Prove it to yourself with small wins like studying for an hour when you'd rather watch TikTok or going to class when you'd rather sleep in.

THE 4 LAWS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

Make it obvious

- Prime your environment to make studying easier (ex. declutter your desk, have Post-it notes, highlighters, and textbooks on hand, eliminate distractions).
    - *Where are you currently studying? Is studying the most obvious option in that environment or will you be easily distracted by more tempting choices like napping, socializing, or watching videos?*
- Make a plan. Instead of saying, "I want to study more," say, "I will study Psychology for 1 hour at 3:30pm in the library."

Make it attractive

- Use temptation bundling: link an action you *want* to do with an action you *need* to do. Pair studying with something you enjoy like your favorite drink or calming music.
- Surround yourself with people who have the habits you want to have. Study with other motivated students.
    - *Attending supplemental labs and Supplemental Instruction, going to the Math Help Center, and using Wintrode Tutoring are all ways to reinforce the shared identity of being a good student.*

Make it easy

- Use the 2-minute rule: commit to studying for just two minutes.
    - Motivation often comes *after* starting, not before. Action produces momentum.
- Make distracting habits that interfere with studying more difficult to do. For example, put your phone on "do not disturb" or shut it in a drawer during study sessions.

Make it satisfying

- Immediate reinforcement helps maintain motivation when developing a new habit. Reward yourself with something you enjoy after completing a study session.
- Use a habit calendar to track your study streaks. Mark an X on the calendar each day you hit your study goal and give yourself bigger rewards for longer streaks.
- Focus on the process rather than the result. Slow progress is better than no progress!

Reference:
Clear, James. *Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*. Avery, an Imprint of Penguin Random House, 2018.