

## **The Super Star Student Formula**

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Do you want to know the secret to becoming a superstar student?

Imagine this: every morning, you jump out of bed, feeling refreshed, no snooze button needed. Your mind is sharp, your backpack is packed, and you're ready to tackle the day like a pro. No last-minute panic about forgotten assignments or cramming for tests. Sounds perfect, right? Well, it's not just a fantasy—it's reality, because you've built the habits and routines that make studying feel effortless, and this stress becomes something you control instead of it controlling you. But here's the kicker—it's not magic. It's something every single one of us can achieve. And today, we're going to show you how.

Now, you might approach things differently than we did, and for your own reasons. We won't stand here and tell you exactly what to do because, let's face it, nobody likes being told how to live their life. But what we will share are a few life hacks that we wish we had known when we first started chasing our goals—the first of which is time management. When we were younger, the world was full of curiosity and endless questions. Remember asking things like, “How are we born?” or “Why do we have to sleep?” Our minds were wide open, and we had all the time in the world to wonder. But as we grew older, things changed. Being a student now sometimes feel like juggling a hundred things at once. There's homework piling up, exams every other week, friendships to maintain, and somehow, trying to figure out what tomorrow even looks like. We all have the same 24 hours. But how we learn to manage those hours is what sets us apart. Whether it's setting daily goals, creating a study routine, or just knowing when to step back and recharge, time management is the foundation for everything else. Mastering it means mastering your day, and that brings you one step closer to mastering your future.

One scientifically proven technique to enhance time management is the **Pomodoro Technique**. This method involves working for 25 minutes straight, followed by a 5-minute break. After four

work sessions, you take a longer break of 15-30 minutes. Research from the University of Illinois found that this technique can significantly improve focus and productivity by minimizing mental fatigue and allowing for effective breaks (*Cirillo, 2006*).

Remember, you do you! This approach might not work for everyone, but it's one of the effective methods that many find useful.

But as crucial as time management is, there's another piece to the puzzle. What happens when life throws something unexpected your way? That's where resilience comes in.

Think back to when everything turned upside down during the COVID pandemic, or more recently, how we're navigating the ongoing war and unrest in Lebanon. These aren't just distant events; they affect our daily lives and our academic paths. You might ask yourself, "How am I supposed to focus on school when everything around me feels like it's falling apart?" It's normal to feel overwhelmed, but here's the thing: resilience isn't about pretending that everything is okay. It's about catching the stress, acknowledging it, and then releasing it before it weighs you down. We're living in a time where uncertainty feels like the only constant. We weren't even sure if we'll be able to present this speech to you in person. We were both sitting in our homes, connected to our phones, writing this with worry in our hearts, unsure of what tomorrow will bring. This is the reality we're living today, and we're not here to tell you that any of this is normal or that we should simply adapt and move on. We don't want to stand here and tell you things that feel unrealistic. We know many of you are grappling with unimaginable stress; some have lost their homes, others live near attack sites, and some are dealing with loss. What we are saying is that, despite the chaos around us, we must find a way to be resilient. We must keep moving forward, even when it feels impossible. You might be wondering how can we talk about focusing on our studies when so much is falling apart around us. But that's exactly why resilience matters. As Biology students, future

doctors, or those of us heading into Itec or other fields, we are only at the beginning of our journey. The challenges we face now are just a fraction of what we will encounter in life. We cannot afford to freeze or remain passive, hoping things will magically improve. If we allow ourselves to be paralyzed by this crisis, if we don't learn to push forward using our education as both a refuge and a tool for change, we risk being stuck.

Yes, these crises might change our plans, but they won't stop us from reaching our academic goals.

In fact, for us, during these times of distress, we found ourselves turning to our education as a way to cope. Instead of being consumed by everything around us, we distracted ourselves by diving into our studies. Whether it was working on our AI project or simply using studying as a mental escape, we found that education became a tool not just for learning, but for self-growth and self-improvement. It's in these moments that we realized that our studies, while challenging, could serve as a form of resilience. Each chapter we learnt, each project we completed, was a step toward taking control of what we could in a world where so much feels out of control.

But resilience isn't just about pushing through tough times. It's also about protecting and nurturing your mental well-being. Without that, everything else can quickly fall apart. Research has consistently shown that mental well-being is closely linked to academic performance. In fact, studies from Harvard University demonstrate that students who prioritize sleep, proper nutrition, and regular exercise tend to perform better academically. Why? Because when your body is functioning at its best, your mind follows (*Zou et al., 2023*).

Let's break it down into three steps:

- Sleep: You might be tempted to pull an all-nighter before exams, but evidence shows that sleep is key to memory retention (*Harvard Division of Continuing Education, 2021*).

Think of it like this: sleep is when your brain files away everything you've learned throughout the day, making it easier to recall when you need it. A good night's rest is not just self-care; it's part of your study plan.

- **Exercise:** It's not about spending hours at the gym. Even just 20 minutes of physical activity can reduce stress levels and boost concentration. Next time you feel overwhelmed, take a short walk—it might just be the reset button your brain needs.

- **Nutrition:** We often overlook how food affects our mood and energy. Eating a balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, and proteins fuels not only your body but your brain. Research from the University of Warwick highlights the link between a balanced diet and better cognitive function (*SciTechDaily, 2023*).

It's also important to step back when necessary and allow yourself to recharge. Whether that's through hobbies, spending time with friends, or even just giving yourself a mental break. Mental health isn't about being strong all the time—it's about knowing when to pause and take care of yourself.

There's another pressure many of us carry, one that can't be solved by a good night's sleep or a balanced meal. As you know, most of us are heading into competitive fields—whether it's medicine, biology, or itec. And the path we're on has shaped the way many of us think about success and failure. It is all centered around the idea that mistakes equal failure and, ultimately, the loss of any chance at a happy or rewarding life. We know the pressure of living your life through the lens of perfectionism. And we know that we're talking to a group of perfectionists—because if you weren't, you wouldn't be here. So, this might be hard to hear:

Mistakes do not define you. Not being the best all the time doesn't mean you're failing. There's this myth of effortless—this idea that we're supposed to glide through challenges, achieve our goals without struggle, and always succeed. But that's just not how life works. We are meant to put in effort. We are supposed to try. But the truth is, we won't always receive the reward we expect, and that's okay. And look—we're the ones up here, so you have to listen to us when we say this: Never be ashamed of trying. It's okay to fall short sometimes. It's okay if things don't come easily. The value lies in the effort, in showing up, and in giving your best even when the odds are against you. You don't need to be perfect. In fact, chasing perfection at all costs can be harmful. It's not sustainable, and it's not healthy. Some days you'll achieve your goals, and some days you won't—but what truly matters is that you keep trying. Progress isn't measured by perfection; it's measured by growth. Keep going, keep learning, and never let the fear of failure stop you from moving forward.

So, what's the Super Star Student Formula? It's you. You already have everything you need inside of you. It's in the way you manage your time, the way you push through challenges, the way you prioritize your well-being. It's in how you ask for help when you need it and find what works for you. There's no one-size-fits-all. But there is one universal truth: the path to becoming a superstar student is paved with small, consistent choices. And every choice you make, every effort you put in, brings you one step closer to your full potential. So, go out there and own it. The only thing stopping you from being the best student you can be is the belief that you're not already capable. And now you know—you are. The next chapter in your academic story is waiting. And spoiler alert—it's going to be epic!

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