College Reading

“Warm Up, Read, and Cool Down” for Active Reading

Reading a textbook is very different from reading for leisure. Reading to learn unfamiliar material usually requires a systematic **“Active” Approach - Muscle Reading.** Approach reading in 3 phases and similar to your approach to working out - **Warm Up, Exercise, and Cool Down**

![MCAN00790_0000[1]]() **Before you read**

**1. Preview**

* Survey the reading assignment as a “warm up” for your brain
* Look for summary statements, headings, subheadings, charts, vocabulary lists, end of chapter questions, and photos
* Find familiar concepts and look for ideas that spark your interest

**2. Outline**

* Create a brief outline of the reading passages on a piece of paper
* Use the text’s headings/subheadings in order to construct your outline

**3. Question**

* Determine what you want to learn from the reading assignment
* Turn chapter headings/subheadings into questions to answer later

![MCAN00790_0000[1]]()**While you read**

**1. Read**

* Stay focused and keep a steady pace - avoid marathon sessions
* Form mental pictures (or draw your own) of the concepts presented
* Reading takes energy – stay engaged by maintaining good posture

**2. Underline**

* Be “physical” with your book by underlining/highlighting important passages to increase neural pathways in your brain
* Complete this activity first with a pencil, then double back with a highlighter
* Highlight sparingly (~ 10% of material)

**3. Answer**

* Answer the questions you created before you started reading
* Add notes to your original outline and/or summarize on paper the main ideas in your own words

![MCAN00790_0000[1]]()**After you read**

**1. Recite**

* Talk to yourself (or someone else) about what you read – this helps to

pull all the pieces together (synthesis)

* Use your outline, drawings, and highlighted concepts as starting points

**2. Review**

* Review your material within 24 hours to allow the information to move from short-term to long-term memory
* 15-minute reviews are fine
* Complete the review before bedtime to maximize retention – you learn when you sleep!

**3. Review Again**

* Review five days a week for easier recall – think refresh, not relearn
* Put key ideas and/or complicated items on a study sheet or note cards
* Utilize these study aids frequently – anytime/anywhere when extra time

![MCAN00790_0000[1]]()**When reading is tough**

**Tips to Try**

* Read it again
* Look for essential words
* Read with a dictionary or app handy
* Read it out loud
* Talk to your instructor
* Take a break
* Skip around the reading assignment
* Form a study group or get tutoring
* Use another textbook
* “Google” it and/or look for video
* Don’t give up!

![MCAN00790_0000[1]]()**Apply it**

Apply these strategies to a textbook you are currently using in one of your classes. Go through each step described above and experiment with the tips.



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**Content adapted from Dave Ellis’ *Becoming a Master Student Athlete***