

ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR STANFORD STUDENTS

ORGANIZING YOUR PHYSICAL WORKSPACE

Create a workspace where you only go to study

- **Why this works:** Your brain picks up cues from your environment, so creating a neat, dedicated workspace will help you get into work mode.
- **How to do this:** Find a comfortable spot, preferably at a desk or table, where you're unlikely to be interrupted. If possible, refrain from using this space for anything other than studying. Make sure you have access to all the resources you need to be productive, and remove anything from your desk (and your digital desktop) not related to the task at hand.

Organize the materials in your workspace

- **Why this works:** A cluttered workspace makes it harder to focus, so it's important to keep it tidy. Keeping similar items together, like writing utensils, also makes them much easier to find when you need them.
- **How to do this:** If you have access to a desk with drawers, consider putting your most used or most important items in the top drawer. If you don't have access to this, keep your most important work items on a specific shelf or in a backpack. Ideally, everything should have a place. You can organize your things by item type (e.g., textbooks with other textbooks) or by course (e.g., all chemistry materials together).

Display a calendar on your wall

- **Why this works:** A physical calendar posted where you'll see it every day offers a tangible reminder of what you've accomplished and what's coming up next.
- **How to do this:** Post your calendar in a space where you can easily see it. Try using the Quarter-at-a-Glance sheet to help you get a "big picture" view of your time. You can even cross off days as they pass for a little motivation boost.