

How Learning Works

Body & health

The principles behind effective study, and why the intuitive methods fail.

Consistent findings across decades of cognitive research.

What works

Retrieval practice — recall without looking

Spacing — return after a gap

Interleaving — mix problem types

Explaining it to someone else

Sleep after studying

What feels like it works

Re-reading

Highlighting

Massed practice — cramming

Studying in one style only

Why

Effortful recall strengthens the memory

Forgetting a little makes relearning stronger

Fluency is recognition, not recall

Learning styles — visual, auditory, kinaesthetic — are not supported by evidence. Match the mode to the material instead.