STAYING MOTIVATED FOR SUCCESS & WELLNESS

Check out the evidence!

Tell us what you think!

WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

Motivation refers to the process of starting and persisting towards a goal.[18]

Whether you are writing a term paper or studying for an exam, motivation is important to get these tasks done.

WHY IS MOTIVATION IMPORTANT?

Motivation is a key factor that can affect **students' learning and performance.**[5, 16, 17, 22]

We often tend to think of motivation as fixed, but that's not accurate!

Motivation is a complex but _flexible_ process that can be impacted by many different factors.[3, 6, 7]

This infographic provides you with strategies to boost and maintain healthy motivation.

Reflecting on the questions below can enhance your motivation to complete a task.

Self-Beliefs: Can I do this?

Reflect on your expectations related to the task; this is called **our self-beliefs** in motivation research.

Your self-beliefs, or what you believe you're able to do, is often impacted by your previous experiences.[1, 21]

Value: Why do I want to do this?

Reflect on the **value** of the task for you in terms of its **usefulness** and **importance,** as well as **your interest in it.** Understanding the value of a task can help you perform well on it.[21]

Take a moment to reflect on the factors underlying your motivation to complete a task.

Self-beliefs
I **expect** that I am capable of doing well on this assignment, as I have done well on others in the past.

Usefulness
What I learn from this assignment will be **useful** to my understanding.

Importance
Performing well in this course is **important** for my career goals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Interest
I find that working on this course assignment is **interesting**.

Your answers to these two questions can influence your **performance, choices, and persistence-** and ultimately, **your motivation** when completing a task.[12, 21]

STRATEGIES FOR BOOSTING AND MAINTAINING HEALTHY MOTIVATION

Look for the brain icon to find strategies that would help your *self-beliefs.*

Look for the heart icon to find strategies that would help maintain your *value* for healthy motivation.

Break a big task down into smaller, achievable steps.

Sometimes, preparing for a big project or exam can be overwhelming.

Break this big task down into smaller steps to **feel an initial sense of achievement.**

For example, writing a term paper is a big task. Drafting an outline is a smaller, more achievable first step!

Outline — Draft — Revise — Submit

Reflect on past positive experiences/successes.

INFLUENCE

Your past experiences/ successes

Your beliefs about your abilities

Your past positive experiences/successes can influence your beliefs about your ability to perform a task.[1, 13, 20]

When taking on a new task, try to reflect on a time when you succeeded at a similar task in the past. This sense of achievement will enhance your motivation by improving your **beliefs about your ability** to complete this new task as well!

View our **Improve Your Time Management** resource to learn how to manage tasks better.

♥ Reflect on your underlying motivation for completing academic tasks.

Reflect on the statement(s) that best represent(s) "why" you aim to complete academic tasks.[8]

	Mastery Goal	Performance Goal
Approach	**Mastering a task** "I want to learn as much as possible."	**Performing better than others on a task** "I want to perform better than other students."
Avoidance	**Avoiding failure to master a task** "I want to avoid having gaps in my knowledge."	**Avoiding being outperformed by others** "I want to avoid doing worse than other students."

Reflecting on your reasons for pursuing a task and how this task is meaningful and relevant for you is **key** in the motivational process. Aim to have **approach** goals, rather than avoidance ones. For example, instead of saying, *"I have to try harder so that I don't fail,"* try saying, *"I want to try harder so that I can learn more".*

Having a **mastery-approach goal** can boost your interest, strategy use, and likelihood of success in the task.[9, 19]
To set a mastery-approach goal, reflect on the earlier question **"Why do I want to do this?"** and how the task is meaningful and relevant to your interests and needs.[10]

While having a **performance-approach goal** may help with achievement, this largely depends on your academic context.[11, 19] For example, if your academic environment only emphasizes outperforming other students, it may be difficult for you to maintain a healthy goal orientation.

🧠 ♥ Remember that your abilities can grow.

Believing that your abilities can grow with effort and effective strategies can increase your chances of success!

Students who see intelligence and capability as something that can grow (**growth mindset**) tend to experience **more positive emotions**, **less anxiety**, and **greater academic achievement**.[4, 12]

In contrast, students who see intelligence and capability as fixed (**fixed mindset**) tend to perceive failure as an indication of low intelligence, which often leads to feelings of **helplessness**.

View our *Managing Expectations & Coping with Academic Challenges* infographic to learn more about growth mindset.

🧠 ♥ Focus on what you can control.

Attributing your successes or failures (positive or negative situations) to factors **outside of your control** can negatively affect **your self-esteem**.[2, 15] Instead, focus on **what you can control** in order to stay motivated to complete future tasks!

👎 **You CANNOT Control**	**Task Difficulty** "This exam was too difficult for me."	**Luck** "I got really lucky on this exam."
👍 **You CAN Control**	**Effort** "I should have studied more for this exam."	**Studying Habits** "I prepared well for this exam."

♥ Foster social connection and belongingness.

Research shows that social connection and belongingness can positively impact one's motivation.[14] You can foster connections with others by engaging in shared activities.
Try the following suggestions to foster connections with your peers and instructors!

Connections with Friends
Create a study group with your classmates
Join a student association (e.g., reading groups)
Volunteer or work at a student lounge or space at school

Connections with Teachers
Visit office hours and tutorials (e.g., lab, demonstration)
Ask questions in class or after class
Take advantage of other opportunities to interact with teachers

CONTACT INFORMATION