HINTS FOR PLANNING STUDY TIME

1. Use daylight hours: research shows that 60 minutes of study during the day is the equivalent of 90 minutes of study at night (Pauk, 1989, p. 45). Study early and save your evenings for relaxing.

2. SURVEY required readings before lectures. Skim over the title, headings, summary, and figures before reading for detail.

3. Study soon after lecture type courses. Retention and understanding are aided by an active review of your lecture notes immediately after class. One study showed that students who wrote a 5-minute review test following a lecture remembered one and a half times as much material as students who did not do the 5-minute review, when tested 6 weeks later (Pauk, 1989, p. 104).

4. List tasks with time estimates. Remember Parkinsons's law that "work expands to fill the time available for its completion." If you allot 2 hours to read 10 pages, it'll probably take you 2 hours to complete this 30-minute task. Set realistic time limits and stick to them.

5. Be realistic. Don't plan study periods during the week if it is unlikely that you will follow through. Do plan one day in advance .In the beginning, you may plan for only 2 or 3 study periods; if you are successful, then plan for 3 or 4 study periods the next week, etc., gradually increasing your commitment to study while always maximizing the probability of success. Set realistic goals and then practice success.

6. Discover how long to study. As a rough starting guide, for every hour in class you should plan to study for one to two hours outside of class. This is what your professors did when they were students, and this is what they expect from you. After a while you can adjust this up or down depending on your performance and learning goals. If you don't have sufficient hours free in the week, then you probably ought to make some changes.

7. Plan blocks of time. In general, optimum efficiency is reached by planning to study in blocks of one hour -- 50 min of study followed by a 10-min break (Pauk, 1989, p. 45). Shorter periods are fine for studying notes (Module 4) and memorizing materials. Longer periods are often needed for problem solving tasks and for writing papers. Some tasks with high interactive involvement (such as computer programming) can be efficient even for long periods. But these are an exception. Take breaks before you need them.

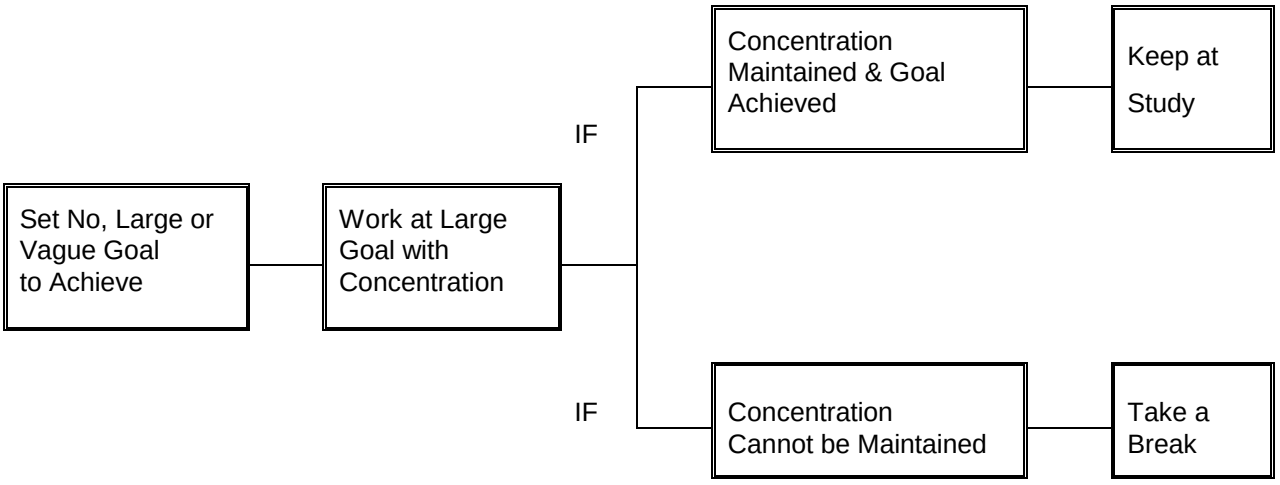
8. Set a clear goal for each study period. Be specific regarding the task that you hope to accomplish during each planned study period. Take a minute to answer the questions: "What am I going to do?" and "What will I be able to do after completing my studying?" Recording your study goal on your Study Log before starting is a good way to stay focused.

9. Master the basics. The material at the beginning of courses, and on a bigger scale in early course will form the basis for later learning. If you don't fully understand the concepts that form the foundation of the subject matter, later learning will be even more difficult. After an examination, it is a good idea to go back and clarify your understanding of concepts that were not fully mastered. If you do, the course (and your program of studies) will be easier and easier as you go.

10. Sleep regularly. The best way to get the most rest out of your sleep is to stick to a regular schedule of sleep times. Most important is getting up at the same time every day…yes even on Sundays! This practice "sets" your internal clock.

PATTERNS OF STUDY AND EFFECTS ON CONCENTRATION

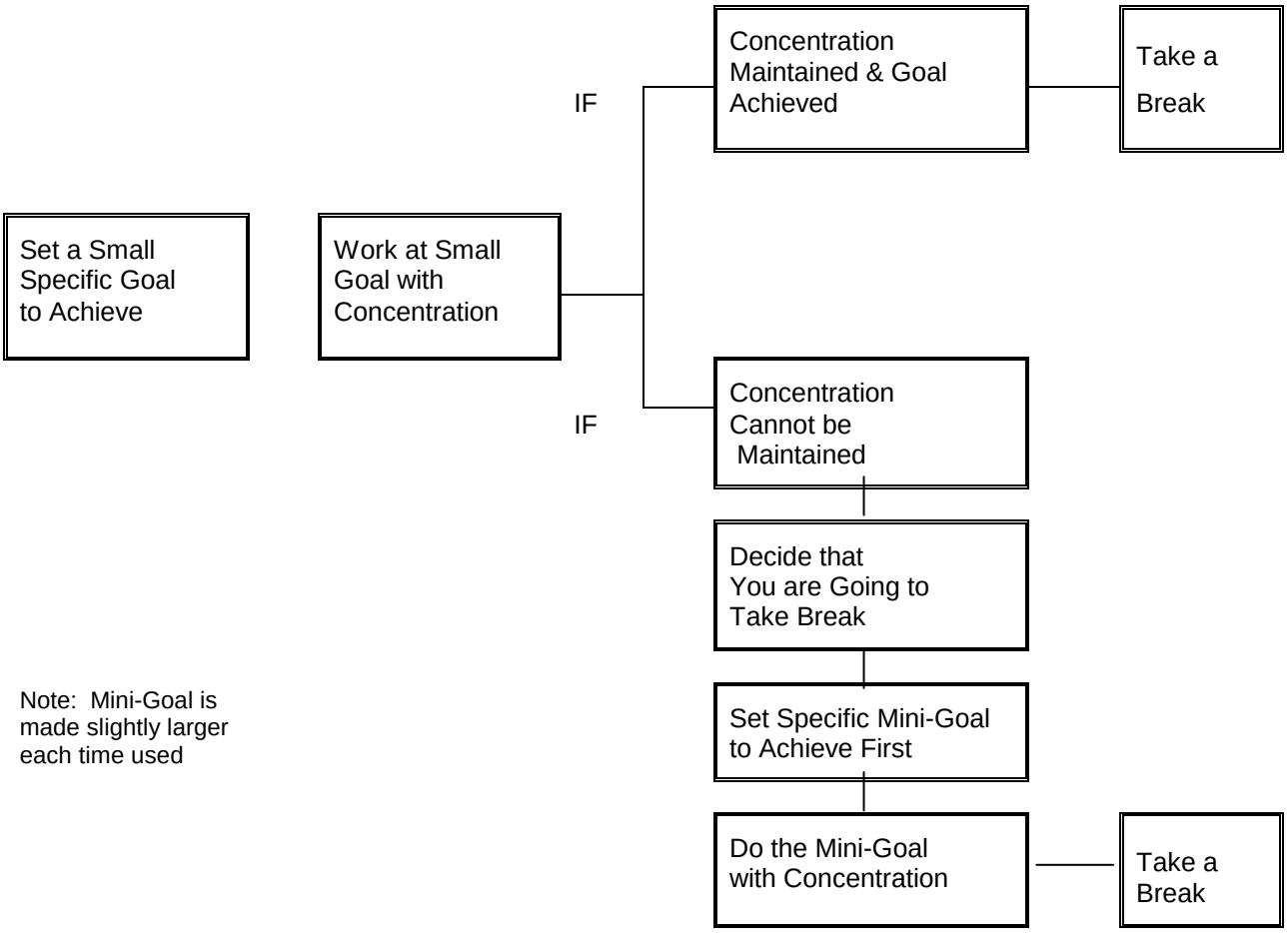
TYPICAL STUDY METHOD



Analysis: Studying typically ends with poor concentration
Poor concentration is reinforced with breaks

Result: Good concentration becomes progressively more difficult!

IMPROVED STUDY METHOD



Note: Mini-Goal is made slightly larger each time used

Analysis: Studying always ends with good concentration.
Good concentration is reinforced with breaks.