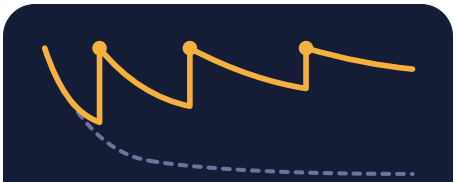
STUDY HALL · LESSON 2 · QUICK REFERENCE

Spaced repetition

Review right before you forget. The gaps start short and get longer, and every review is a quick test, never a reread.



Gold: each review flattens the drop.
Dashed: learn it once and it fades.

Why it works

- The moment I learn something, I start forgetting it. Most of the loss comes in the first day or two.
- New connections in the brain are weak. If I don't use them, my brain clears them out.
- Each time I pull the answer back out of my head, those connections get stronger, and it fades more slowly the next time.

The two rules

- **Spacing is when.** Several times in the first sitting, then further and further apart.
- **Active recall is how.** I answer from memory: work a problem, answer a flashcard, or write it on a blank page with the answer covered.
- Reading or rewriting my notes does not count. The answer is in front of me, so my brain rebuilds nothing.

When I review

Same sitting	Later today	Next day	3 days later	1 week later	Exam week
3 or 4 times, minutes apart	before bed works				once more

After the first sitting, each review takes 5 to 10 minutes. Need more passes? Start tighter: 1, 5 and 20 minutes, then an hour.

Example: 15 parts of the cell on flashcards

Nucleus: holds the DNA. Ribosomes: build proteins. Lysosomes: break down waste. I don't read the whole stack front to back. I add one new card, then go back through the ones before it from memory.

1 › **2** 1 › **3** 2 1 › **4** 3 2 1 › **5** 4 3 2 …

1 New card: look, flip, read the answer 1 Earlier card: say the answer out loud without looking

- The gap for each card grows by itself, because more cards sit in between.
- When a card gets easy, I set it aside. I bring it back at card 10 and again after all 15.
- Later that day I do it a different way: I look at the front, then write the function on paper, the way the test will ask.
- For chemistry or calculus, the test is a problem worked from scratch, example closed.

Is my timing right?

- **Feels easy:** I came back too soon. Wait longer.
- **Nothing comes back:** I waited too long. Tighten it.
- **A little struggle:** that's the sweet spot.

Every study block has two parts

- **Look forward:** today's material, several times.
- **Look back:** a quick test on yesterday and last week.

Three mistakes

- **Rereading.** Reading my notes three times in a week is still just reading.
- **One pass through the stack.** Start with 5 cards, mix in more, and repeat in the same sitting.
- **Even gaps.** Short at first, longer each time.

If I've forgotten half of it when I test myself, that is exactly when it works.