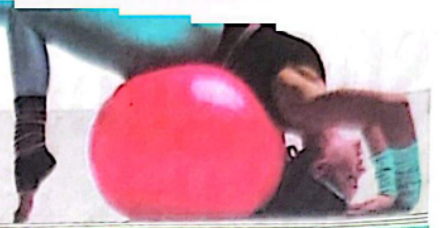


Pictorial. What went down at Kisubi Mapeera Sports Day. P.21

Voxpop. How teens can strengthen environmental sustainability. P.22



Struggling to study? Start with this simple routine

Educators agree that consistency is more important than intensity. A student who studies for a short period every day is more likely to perform well than one who studies for long hours only occasionally. P.20

BY GLORIA IRANKUNDA

At the beginning of the term, most of you are ambitious. Books are open, timetables in place, and promises are made. But as days go by, that plan begins to weaken. School becomes tiring, distractions increase, and the energy to keep going fades. Studying then shifts from being regular to something done only when tests or exams are close. This pattern creates stress and often leaves you feeling unprepared.

However, a consistent study routine changes this experience. It does not require extreme effort or long hours every day. Instead, it focuses on regular, manageable study that fits into a student's daily life. When done well, it reduces pressure, improves understanding, and builds confidence over time.

Educators agree that consistency is more important than intensity. A student who studies for a short period every day is more likely to perform well than one who studies for long hours only occasionally.

"Students often believe success comes from last minute effort, but learning is a process that needs time," says Bosco Mutawe a Biology teacher at Modern Times Secondary School, Kirombe. "Consistency allows the brain to absorb and retain information better."



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FROM PAGE 19

Managing time

The starting point for any study routine is understanding how time is currently spent. After school, most of you are tired. You rest, talk to friends, use your phone, or help with chores at home. By the time you think about studying, the day is already ending. Without planning, study time keeps getting pushed aside.

"To build a routine, you need to take a close look at your daily schedule. This can be as simple as writing down what happens from the moment you return home," Mutawe explains.

Identifying time that can be used for study helps create a realistic plan. The goal is not to remove rest or social time but to organise the day better.

Janet Musoke, a school counsellor at Citylight Progressive School, Kungu notes that many routines fail because they are too ambitious. "If a student suddenly decides to study for many hours every day, it becomes difficult to maintain. A routine should fit into their real life."

Starting small

"You can begin with one or two hours of study each day at a fixed time. This could be in the evening after resting or early in the morning before school," Musoke says. What matters most is consistency. Doing it at the same time each day helps turn studying into a habit rather than a struggle.

Having a clear plan for each study session is also important. Many students sit down with their books but spend too much time deciding what to read. This leads to frustration and wasted time. A simple plan helps avoid this.

"For example, you can decide to revise notes from a specific subject, practise questions, or read ahead for the next lesson. Breaking subjects into smaller topics makes studying feel more manageable. Instead of saying, 'I will study Chemistry,' it is easier to focus on one topic within the subject," Musoke advises.

Study environment

Another important factor is the study environment. Mutawe notes that you may not need a perfect or quiet room, especially in busy homes, but you need a space that supports concentration. This could be a table, a corner of a room, or any place where distractions are reduced.

Phones are one of the biggest challenges to building a routine. Messages, notifications, and social media can easily interrupt study time.

Even a short distraction can break concentration and make it harder to continue.

"Many students are physically present with their books but mentally elsewhere," he says. "Reducing phone use during study time is one of the simplest ways to improve consistency."

Keeping the phone away, switching off data, or setting specific times to check messages can help create focus. These small changes can make study sessions more productive.

Rest

Musoke observes that sometimes students believe that studying without breaks is a sign of seriousness, but this is not effective. The brain needs time to rest in order to process information.

Short breaks between study sessions can help maintain focus. For instance, studying for a set period and then taking a brief break can make it easier to continue. Sleep is equally important.

"A student who is constantly tired will struggle to stay consistent," Musoke states.

Discipline

Motivation is not always reliable. There will be days when you don't feel like studying. This is normal and happens to everyone. A routine should not depend on mood but on discipline.

As Musoke explains, "Motivation can start a habit, but discipline keeps it going. Students need to learn to study even on days when they do not feel like it."

This does not mean forcing long hours of study. It means sticking to the planned routine, even if the session is shorter or less intense. Over time, this builds resilience and commitment.

Track progress

Tracking progress can help you stay consistent. This can be done using a simple notebook or calendar where study days are

marked.

"Seeing progress can be encouraging and can motivate you to continue," says Sylvia Kyomuhendo, a Kiswahili teacher at Modern Times Secondary School, Kirombe.

It is also important to accept that no routine is perfect. There will be days when plans are interrupted by school activities, family responsibilities, or unexpected events.

"Missing one day should not lead to giving up entirely. The focus should be on returning to the routine as soon as possible," Kyomuhendo explains.

Mind your circle

Friends can influence study habits in different ways. Supportive friends can encourage consistency, while others may create distractions.

"You need to make choices about when to study and when to socialise," Kyomuhendo says.

At the same time, it is important not to compare routines. Every student is different, and what works for you may not work for your friend. The goal is to find a system that fits individual needs and circumstances.

Parents and teachers also have a role to play. Encouragement and understanding can help students stay committed to their routines. "When students feel supported rather than pressured, they are more likely to remain consistent," Kyomuhendo stresses.

Building a study routine takes time. It involves trying different approaches, making adjustments, and learning what works best. There may be moments of frustration, but these are part of the process.

"Over time, the routine becomes easier to follow.

Studying starts to feel like a normal part of the day rather than a burden," Musoke notes. This reduces stress, especially during exam periods, because preparation is already in place.

Be consistent

Consistency builds confidence. Kyomuhendo shares that when students see improvement in their understanding and performance, they feel more capable and motivated to continue. This positive cycle makes it easier to maintain the routine.

"In the long run, a consistent study routine is not just about passing exams. It helps students develop discipline, responsibility, and time management skills. These are qualities that will be useful beyond school," she explains.

As Mutawe puts it, "Success is not built in a single day. It is built through small efforts repeated over time. A consistent study routine is one of the strongest foundations you can have."



Having a clear plan for each study session is important.

KEEP TRACK

Tracking progress can help you stay consistent. This can be done using a simple notebook or calendar where study days are marked. "Seeing progress can be encouraging and can motivate you to continue," says Sylvia Kyomuhendo, a Kiswahili teacher at Modern Times Secondary School, Kirombe. It is also important to accept that no routine is perfect. There will be days when plans are interrupted by school activities, family responsibilities, or unexpected events. "Missing one day should not lead to giving up entirely. The focus should be on returning to the routine as soon as possible," Kyomuhendo explains.