

# Study notes

The start of the school year is almost here. Ease your teen into low-stress study habits with the right environment for success, writes Kirsten Craze



The school year is about to kick off again. For teenage students, this can be when study starts getting serious – and stressful. Parents can help their teenagers by creating a calming space for study at home.

Whether the homework zone is a shared area in the kitchen or a corner of their own bedroom, there are a number of ways to take the tension out of study time.

In a recent survey on mental health and study by Headspace, a non-profit organisation supporting the mental health of young

Australians, 83.2 per cent of high school and tertiary students said they were feeling stressed, 79 per cent felt anxious, 82.1 per cent lacked energy and 55.6 per cent had trouble sleeping.

In addition to preparing a study plan, openly communicating with others and eating well and exercising, Headspace says students need a study space that is comfortable, quiet, well organised and without distractions.

Carolyn McCallum has recently seen her teenagers go through final exams. She says the best job a

parent can do is keep the kids hydrated, make sure their down time doesn't involve too much screen time, and resist nagging.

"As a feng shui master, I was also able to ensure they had their desk in favourable energy specifically associated with academic achievement and sat and slept in a favourable direction," Carolyn says. "Ensuring the house had excellent feng shui provided them with additional support."

Head of public health at Bupa, Dr Zoe Wainer, says a comfortable and functional environment in

which to study will set teens up for better work-life balance in future.

"Sitting for hours on end at school and at home can place students at risk of developing stiff muscles, weight gain and negatively affect their mood," she says. "Encouraging your children to take regular breaks to stretch and exercise their muscles, spend time outside or even study standing up for short periods can help reduce these risks and encourage healthy study habits."

More: [fengshuiharmony.com.au](http://fengshuiharmony.com.au)  
Picture: [taubmans.com.au](http://taubmans.com.au)

## CLEAR MINDED

"A cluttered desk equals a cluttered mind," says feng shui master Carolyn McCallum.

"Keep the work area as open and clear as possible using clever storage solutions where possible."

Today's students might have less paperwork and text books, but technology can still get messy.

"Cable management solutions are essential to keep any study space decluttered and organised," says Shona Jackson from Ikea. "It's easy for cords and cables to create mess, particularly in small spaces."

Wireless charging solutions are also a great option to help reduce cables and cords.

"Using shelving or pegboards helps organise those belongings that might otherwise end up on the floor or the desk," she says.

Carolyn says good airflow is also a key feng shui principle that allows positive energy to move freely around the stressed out student.

"Having a solid wall behind them provides them with additional support. Adding a large black chair is another way they will feel supported when studying. And being able to see the doorway also gives them a feeling of power and being in control and helps their confidence," she says.

Picture: [globewest.com.au](http://globewest.com.au)





## KEEP CALM

Interior stylist and Dulux ambassador Julia Green says rather than focusing on colours, think shades.

"Softer palettes encourage more calming spaces," she says.

"Always include greenery in your teen's room for extra oxygen and a touch of life among the dirty socks."

Clayton from Beacon Lighting says a bright, well-lit space is key to encouraging productivity and focus: "A desk lamp for task lighting will help reduce eye strain over time."

[beaconlighting.com.au](http://beaconlighting.com.au);  
[dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au)



## STRAIGHT UP

Zoe Wainer from Bupa says parents should encourage their children to take regular study breaks and get some exercise.

"Invest in a desk and chair set-up for your child which promotes good posture and is appropriate for their height. Make sure the

computer monitor is at the right height with the top of the screen at eye level," she says.

Shona from Ikea says sit/stand desks will allow your child to alternate between positions. Zoe says it's also worthwhile checking in with your teen regularly: "If you notice your child squinting, consult your GP for advice. Something as simple as a new optical prescription or a physiotherapist referral to improve posture can make a big difference to a child's study habits."

**Picture: norsu.com.au**



## HOT DESK

"Finding space for a permanent study area can be difficult, so it's important to use furniture that lets you easily convert any area into a comfortable and effective work space," says Shona Jackson, country interior design manager for Ikea.

When studying in communal areas, devices such as a laptop supports are essential. Clayton Driessen from Beacon Lighting says for study in multipurpose spaces like kitchen counters and dining tables, consider both the task and ambient light by placing downlights and spotlights to illuminate zones appropriately.

"Using tuneable colour LED technology in a multipurpose space allows us to set the perfect light, colour and intensity to suit individual needs," he says. "Choose a bright cool-white intensity for a focused space or a softer light for a quiet read."

[ikea.com.au](http://ikea.com.au)

