

7 Positive Habits of Successful People and why you should follow suit for success in your accounting studies and career

You've made the bold decision of purchasing an AAT accounting or bookkeeping course, you've chosen to invest in yourself, your career and your future. Of course this means that you want to achieve the qualification, as this is the first step towards your personal and career goals, so how do you ensure that you will be successful in order to realise your dreams?

Studying AAT, especially via distance learning is not an easy task. It will require **hard work**, **commitment** and **perseverance**. We hear these words used regularly but what does it really mean to put these words into action in order to be truly successful?

In this article, we will share with you some of our findings about what makes a successful person successful, and the habits that should be developed in order to improve your chances of success in all areas of life.

What is a habit? A habit is a behaviour or practice that is done on a regular basis. Although many habits occur unconsciously, they can be acquired through frequent repetition.

Why are habits important? Habits are something you do regularly without really having to think about it too much - the behaviour has become part of your routine. Once a habit has set in, it's hard to break! Therefore, good habits can help you to reach your goals.

Which habits will be useful for you to acquire and practice, in order to ensure success?

1. Early Bird!

Successful people wake up early and have a solid morning routine

There is a lot of research that shows that waking up early improves our brain activity, productivity and generally our overall health. According to studies, our willpower is strongest in the morning, and our brains are sharpest 2.5 to 4 hours after waking.

We are not scientists, but we do believe there's a lot to be said for routines too! However, AAT students come from many different backgrounds and circumstances, and it's not always possible to stick to a solid routine.

If you aren't able to make changes to when you wake up, you could give more thought to what you do upon waking when your brain is at its sharpest in order to choose the best time to study.

We know you've heard it all before, but successful people:

- Get enough sleep
- Don't hit the snooze button
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day (proven to increase focus and brain power for the day)
- Use the morning to plan the day ahead and set their goals for the day

*"It is well to be up before daybreak, for such habits contribute to health, wealth, and wisdom."
- Aristotle*

2. An Effective 'To Do' List

Successful people prioritise. They have a plan, realistic daily and weekly goals, and they get the most dreaded tasks out of the way first.

I am sure that many of us are familiar with the notion of creating a 'To Do' list, only to keep rearranging it when tasks don't get done.

An effective 'To Do' list should be organised, prioritised and regularly reviewed.

To get the most out of your list, prioritising is key. You need to decide what your most important tasks are and they need to be at the top. Work through your to do list in order, don't check tasks off based on what you would prefer to do first.

For a student studying AAT, working towards a change or improvement in your career, studying needs to come at the top of the list as a priority if you want to make good progress.

At **eagle** we follow this theory, as our recommended order of study means that the most challenging units are completed first. How much better does it feel to have completed a challenging unit, and know that smaller hills are ahead?

*"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."
- Walt Disney*

3. Why Not Now?

Successful people get the tasks done. They are pro-active, know how to manage procrastination and are self-aware.

Procrastination is human nature, it's a very easy trap to fall into. Many of us will recognise the internal dialogue similar to 'I'll do it later', 'I'll do it tomorrow', or 'I'm too busy'.

Successful people are able to be honest with themselves in regards to excuses made to avoid a task, and can force themselves to power through and get it done, even when they really don't feel like it.

Start small - setting yourself a target of reading 2 pages of your book per day, or studying for 15 minutes is a lot less daunting than much larger targets. Force yourself to stick to a minimum target every single day. You'll soon notice that 2 pages turns into 20, or 15 minutes turns in to an hour!

This practice will soon become a habit and you'll be well on your way to success.

Read more about overcoming procrastination here: <https://www.eagle-education.co.uk/news/how-to-overcome-procrastination-putting-your-aat-studies-off/67>

*"There is no other way to find out whether or not you will be successful other than just doing it."
- Richard Branson*

4. Give Yourself Some TLC

Successful people take care of their wellbeing. They stay active, look after their health and have all important balance.

To be successful in anything in life, we firstly need to take care of ourselves! We can't expect our brains to learn new things if we don't have balance, rest and good health.

To ensure you're in the best position to study effectively, you need to have the basics down:

- **Eat regularly** - Eating healthily and snacking is essential to ensure that our blood sugar does not run too low. Eating well and snacking is proven to increase focus and brain productivity, especially when using so much brain power learning new information!
- **Drink water** - We're sure everyone is familiar with the importance of hydration. This can make a big difference to your concentration and motivation levels. The average adult needs to drink around 2 litres of water a day.
- **Stay active** - Physical activity is proven to boost production, it makes you smarter and sharpens the mind. It's also fantastic stress relief. Next time you hit a brain block, go outside for a brisk walk and some fresh air, it'll make all the difference.
- **Take a break** - Yes we said it! Schedule in rest times to your routine too. Time out to do the things that you enjoy is essential to your well-being.
- **Reward yourself for work well done** - Set yourself rewards for achieving targets, recognise the hard work you have done and allow yourself to feel proud of every achievement big or small.

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."
- Barack Obama

5. Never Stop Learning

Successful people thrive off self-development and are always keen to learn more about themselves and the world around them. They are also skilled communicators.

One of the best ways to learn is to read, and we're not just talking about your AAT materials!

Business Insider UK published an article in 2016 reporting that Bill Gates, the richest man in the world, reads 50 books a year to continue to learn new things. He attributes much of his success and big dreams to his reading as a child.

It's never too late to start. At **eagle** we are big fans of reading and research, especially around topics such as how humans learn, learning models, learning styles, human psychology and motivational texts. Learning about the human brain and your learning style can help you to understand more about how you take in new information, and the best ways to motivate yourself to succeed.

Reading is also proven to improve communication skills, which are essential for the written tasks in your AAT assessments and your accounting career.

We recommend reading anything that you will enjoy, but a few of our favourites are:

- Anthony Robbins 'Awaken the Giant Within'
- Prof Steve Peters 'The Chimp Paradox'
- Stephen Covey 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'

*“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”
- Mahatma Gandhi*

6. Seek Support

Successful people are not afraid to ask for help, they know that nobody can be the master of everything and that you learn more by listening to those around you.

Acknowledging your strengths and weaknesses is a special skill. You are well on your way to success if you can be proud of your strengths, and accept help and support to develop your weaknesses.

Don't hold back on seeking support from those around you, and learning from those that have mastered skills that you are still working towards.

For a student studying AAT, this can be anything from asking your family for support with your studies in order to allow you to have time free from distraction, to seeking advice from your support mentor or training provider when you become stuck with a question.

You can sometimes feel a little bit lonely when you study by distance learning, as many students often study alone from home or at work. If you're looking for some support from peers we have a fantastic, supportive Facebook group where students come together to discuss their achievements and challenges with their courses called **Eagle Education Buddies**, you can join here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EagleEducationBuddies/>

You are more likely to overcome obstacles more quickly if you have a team behind you, and you're able to accept help when it's needed.

*“Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength. It shows you have the courage to admit when you don't know something, and then allows you to learn something new.”
-Barack Obama*

7. Believe in Yourself

Successful people have a strong sense of self-belief, they invest in themselves and they are not afraid of failing.

Self-belief is a very important factor to success. We all face disappointment and fear at some point in our lives, but successful people do not let themselves be deterred by these experiences.

Successful people view failure as an opportunity to learn rather than the end of the road. J.K. Rowling is quoted as saying “Failure is so important. We speak about success all the time. It is the ability to resist failure or to use failure that often leads to greater success. I've met people who don't want to try for fear of failing.”

In order to experience true success, we must learn from our failures and look for the lesson that is to be found instead.

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It takes hard work and a lot of courage, but you must believe that you are capable of accomplishing your goals, and be willing to do what it takes to get there.

At **eagle** we **believe** in people - when there is opportunity and encouragement everyone can achieve their ambitions.

Successful people invest time, energy and care into themselves. You have already taken the first step by investing in your future, by starting your qualification. Now it's time to eradicate any self-doubt and prepare yourself to do the work that is required to propel yourself into the next stage in your career!

"Believe in yourself and back yourself to come out on top. A fulfilling career is waiting for those brave enough to find it"
- Richard Branson



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