

# HSSA Apple Newsletter

January edition



31 January, 2025



## Tips for a Successful New Semester

By: Alex Rowley

*Getting back into the new semester may be challenging. Adjusting to new routines and schedules can take time and be difficult, but it's quite possible with the proper tools and mindset. Here are some strategies to help you start the semester off right and successfully!*

- **Start Fresh**

The previous semester may not have gone as well as you had hoped, and that's all right. Try not to dwell on past challenges, use them as motivation to return even stronger this upcoming semester. A new semester is a fresh start, and an opportunity to do better. Approach it with a positive attitude and focus on how you can improve going forward!

- **Get Organized**

Effective organization is especially important to your academic success. It may be useful to find a system that works for you when it comes to taking notes and staying on top of tasks. Keeping track of upcoming due dates and assignments is key to staying organized. This can be done through electronic tools such as Google Calendar, Notion, or even a physical planner. Consistently reviewing tasks and prioritizing them accordingly is crucial to maintaining organization and staying on track.

- **Create a Routine That Works For You**

Creating a daily routine is very important for staying on track. This may include establishing a consistent wake-up time, creating a study schedule, and finding time for physical activity. A balanced and predictable routine can promote better focus, reduce stress, enhance learning, and improve productivity. Ensure that your schedule effectively meets your needs, as every student has a different approach to what works best for them!

### In this newsletter you can expect:

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Places to explore

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Study hacks

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Tips for a successful new semester

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- **Start Early and Get Ahead**

Procrastinating tasks can lead to last-minute cramming and stress. By starting assignments early, you are allowing yourself more time to learn the material, and lessening the pressure of upcoming due dates. Getting ahead allows you to focus on comprehension of the content rather than just completion. This approach may lead to better retention and higher-quality work.

- **Find a Study Space that Works For You**

Your study environment plays a great role in your level of productivity. A good study space should be clean and free from outside distractions. It should be a place that allows you to focus, whether that's a desk or table at home, or even somewhere like a library or coffee shop. As tempting as it may be, you should avoid studying in bed. Your body associates that space with sleep, making you more likely to doze off while working and reducing the quality of your sleep schedule.

- **Set Achievable Goals**

Setting realistic and achievable goals is helpful to maintain motivation throughout the semester. This may include completing a set number of tasks a day, such as reading a certain number of pages, or even getting enough sleep each night. Having smaller, more manageable tasks prevents burnout and procrastination, which allows you to make progress!

- **Self-Care**

It's necessary to remember that your well-being is just as important as your academic achievement. Try incorporating self-care practices, such as taking necessary breaks, eating well, and exercising regularly. Your physical and mental health are interrelated, and closely linked to productivity. Prioritizing self-care will help you stay focused and do your best in the upcoming semester!

**By using these effective strategies, you'll be better prepared for the transition into a new semester, while maintaining a sense of balance. Stay organized and focused and remember that each semester is a chance to improve and succeed. Good luck with the upcoming year!**



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# 5 Study Hacks to Maximize the New Semester

## By: Maggie Li

Happy New Year! Starting a new semester is nerve-racking, but also a great opportunity to start on a clean state. Fresh new study strategies can help maximize your productivity and success this year. Your academic weapon journey begins now! Here are 5 study hacks to help you get started...

- **Create a Dedicated Study Environment**

As tempting as it is to curl up in your bed to write your essay, setting up a specific space exclusively for learning allows you to associate the space with focus and productivity. It's important to keep the space clean, organized, and free of distractions to help declutter your mind and focus on the task at hand. Consistency in your study environment helps enhance concentration and effectiveness.

- **Leverage Active Recall & Spaced Repetition**

Test yourself frequently on your lecture content rather than re-reading or highlighting material. This technique is called "Active Recall." It enhances memory retention by turning lecture content into your own words for better understanding and memorization. Try using flashcards or mock exams to help build your active recall.

In addition, review information over increasing intervals of time such as one day, three days, or one month to help embed the information into your memory. It may be easier to memorize and understand lectures over time and keep track of areas you're weaker in for additional review. Apps like Anki and Quizlet will make repetition and active recall much easier.

- **Utilize the Pomodoro Technique**

Research has shown that taking breaks while studying is much more beneficial than reviewing for hours on end. Break your study sessions into focused intervals of work followed by short breaks- for example, 25 minutes of work and a 5-minute break. This technique helps maintain productivity and prevents mental fatigue. After four "Pomodoro" sessions, try to take a longer break of 15-30 minutes to ease your mind for longer.

- **Mix Up Your Studying**

When you're getting stuck on a topic or course, try mixing different types of problems or topics into one study session. This approach can help improve your ability to differentiate between problems and strategies, enhancing problem-solving skills and allowing your brain to take a different approach. This is particularly effective for subjects like math and science.

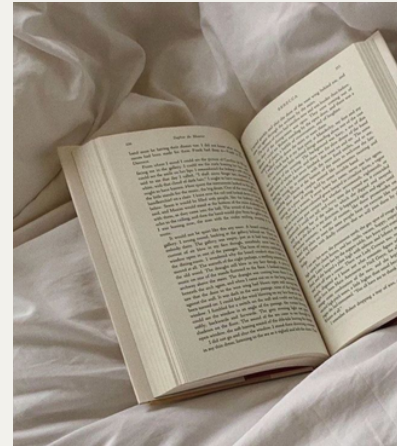
- **Reflect & Adjust**

At the end of each week or study session, take the time to breathe and reflect on what worked well versus what didn't in your study process. Adjust your studies based on what techniques work best for you. Giving yourself the time to self-reflect helps optimize your studying time and adapt to academic challenges.



**The most important takeaway here is to listen to yourself and what works for you. No matter the challenge, believe in yourself and know when to take breaks. Although university is academically rigorous, we must take care of our mental and physical well-being above all to focus and excel in our goals.**

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## Hobbies to explore in the New Year

By: Carmela Bauan

*As the new year dawns upon us, the topic of New Year's resolutions become increasingly relevant, as many aspire to properly reset from what was likely an overwhelming year. Transitioning into the new year may garner mixed emotions – from feelings of excitement to fear and anxiety. No matter the time of year, our well-being is something we must always prioritize in our New Year's resolutions. What better way to do so than to explore new hobbies?*

There are three types of pastimes everyone should consider: something that keeps you active, fosters creativity, and stimulates your intellect.

- **Exercise** is scientifically linked to positive mental health and well-being. It releases endorphins and serotonin, often called the brain's "feel-good" chemicals. It also improves our cognitive functioning, which we all value as academic weapons of 2025!
- **Creative activities** could be anything that leaves you feeling inspired. These pursuits cultivate feelings of motivation, which are essential for maintaining positivity throughout the year. Examples include learning a new instrument, scrapbooking, and sculpting to name a few.
- **Intellectual hobbies** are great ways to exercise your brains separate from academic stress while still building knowledge. It's important to indulge in some form of "literary escapism" through either reading or journaling. Perhaps you could also try learning a new language this year, travel, solve puzzles, be a tourist in your own city, and the list goes on.

**Don't feel discouraged if it takes time to commit to something new. Approach this year with an open mind, and incorporate happiness into your daily routines!**

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# Places to Explore in 2025

## By: Ella Crawford

*As a London local, probably the most common question I got asked in first year was, “Do you know any fun things to do in London?” The answer was usually “not much”, because aside from some lit parties, London’s certainly not the most exciting city in the world. But after a year of exploring hidden gems and doing some internet digging, I thought I’d put together a list for you!*

*It’s always nice to have something to look forward to at the end of the day, week, month, to take your mind off work and help make the year memorable. Whether it means finally getting your plans out of the group chat or taking yourself on a solo date, here are some lesser-known (and well-known) places to explore in 2025!*

*They’re all organized by price, because let’s be real—today’s economy is brutal, but not all activities have to empty your wallet. So without further ado...*

### My List of Top London Spots

First, [a page I discovered](#) in the fall that posts specific events happening each day of the week. A lot of the free things happening downtown/at bars are shared here.

#### 100% free:

- [Western concerts](#) - Western offers plenty of affordable and free opportunities that you probably already hear about, but here’s one that’s a little lesser known. If you enjoy watching concerts, the music department is never *not* having one—and they’re free for Western students! There’s even an opera performance in March (though you need to pay for that one). Check out the schedule and locations [here](#).
- [Cowboys bar](#) - **free line dancing** lessons during the warmer months.
- **Walking trails**
  - [Elsie Perrin Williams Estate](#) - A popular wedding venue and photo-op spot (my friends and I took our prom photos here), surrounded by beautiful trails! Very close to Western, just down Windermere Road.
  - [Killaly Meadows](#)
  - [Springbank Park](#)
  - [Medway Valley](#)
  - [Fanshawe Conservation Area](#) - You have to check it out if you haven’t already! Though the city buses don’t go there, it’s not far if you drive or know someone with a car. It’s a gorgeous place to visit that also runs a Haunted Village event for Halloween.
- [London Public Library](#) - There are many locations scattered across the city, and some even have bookable study rooms! When’s the last time you browsed a library just for fun? If you have a membership (easy to get), you can also use the Libby app to download books (although the waitlist is often crazy long). My favourite location is Stoney Creek.

#### Bare bones budget:

- [Tuesday movies at Cineplex](#) - The best day of the week to see a movie is TUESDAY, since tickets are \$10. But from Jan. 14th - Feb. 11th 2025, the price is actually **dropping to \$5**, with \$5 popcorn! Run, don’t walk.
- [Poacher’s karaoke rooms](#) - The only local bar with **private karaoke rooms** you can rent! Perfect for friend groups who want to avoid open mics ;) They’re not a bad price when splitting with a big group, but you do have to pay more for the larger room.
- **Ice skating**
  - [Vic park](#) - You probably know about this one, but if you haven’t been yet, this is your sign!!! Hands down one of the best winter activities—and the only cost is **\$8 to rent skates**. They also offer sharpening for the same price if you bring your own. It’s so much fun with friends, especially at night.
  - [Storybook gardens](#) - This outdoor rink is a **trail that loops around** their grounds, making for a unique experience!
  - Public skates - For skating in indoor arenas, the city has times listed at [this link](#)
  - *Roller skating* - This was hard to find the details for, but there’s **drop-in roller skating for ages 18+** at the North London Optimist Community Center on **Wednesday nights**! Pricing can range from \$9-14 if you’re renting skates. You can find the details [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)
- [Heeman’s greenhouse](#) - Calling all plant lovers!! This is an amazing place to go in the winter if you want a warm, cozy space full of **plants (and coffee)**. They also run regular workshops you can keep an eye out for. Heeman’s is *not* a bussable location, but it’s near the Fanshawe conservation area, and not too far outside London. If you’re still around during the summer, I highly recommend going for strawberry picking and to walk around the gardens. Disclosure: I actually worked there last summer, so maybe I’m biased...

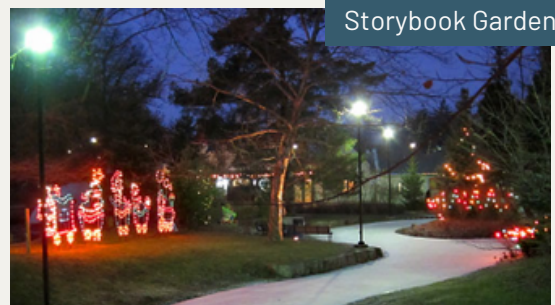


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- Tilt Arcade Bar - I've personally never been, but this one's on my bucket list. **Unlimited play for \$7** sounds like a no-brainer!
  - The ALLEY - A cute boba shop with a **photobooth!** It's a reasonable price for photos, especially if you're splitting with 2, 4, or 8 (prints 2 strips of 4 photos). You can also pay extra for more strips. They've got fun photo props and everything—I definitely recommend checking it out with your friends.
  - **Cafes**
    - Happiness - Pricy, but fair (desserts are more premium), and their aesthetic is unmatched!
    - Reset - Best place to study, free board games, and they heat up the muffins for you :)
    - Variety - My personal fav—queer-friendly, cozy atmosphere, if you order-in they put your drink in a unique mug each time!
    - Bag\_lady - Never actually ate there because it was CLOSED when I wanted to go, but another bucket-list one. It's vintage-diner themed and they do **brunch and formal-ish tea, as well as alcohol!** So really just a mix of everything
  - **Thrift/antique stores**
    - Plato's closet - Again, never been, but if you're looking to **make some money from your old clothes**, and then go find more, this is the place to do that! They advertise sustainability, affordability, and convenience.
    - Memory Lane Antiques - This place might not seem like much, but I was shocked by how big it was and how perfectly laid out everything was. If you like aesthetic, unique pieces, I highly recommend checking it out—you'll find some real treasures. They've also got LOTS of vinyls!
    - Dugout vintage - You may remember them from the Dugout Vintage event(s) on campus. Their store is downtown in two locations (one on Dundas and one at Covent Garden Market)
    - Attic Books - One of the oldest and largest antique book stores in London! If you're a book-lover, this is the place to be—they've got so much variety you could be in there for hours searching, and prices are sooo cheap.
    - Grooves - The best vinyl store downtown! Again, so much variety and they're on Dundas as well, right in the center of everything.
    - Covent Garden Market - A bustling hub in the middle of downtown, full of vendors selling food and unique items. Every time I go there there's something new to see, and if you go upstairs there's some tables perfect for chilling and studying. They also run the Merry Market during the holiday season.
    - Uber Cool Stuff - A small shop filled to the brim with kooky items you can't find anywhere else. **They've also got a dog** (still young and training) who you can say hi to!
    - Open DIY workshop (with access to all supplies) - A nice space where you can create using any of their tools, including a sewing machine, wax-melting pots, easels, jewelry tools, silicone molds, embroidery hoops, punch needles, all kinds of drawing & painting supplies, scrapbooking paper, mixed media materials, calligraphy pens and ink, clay, yarn and string, and more. It's **pay what you can**: reserve a spot here. I found this place when researching for this article, and I honestly want to go so bad now.

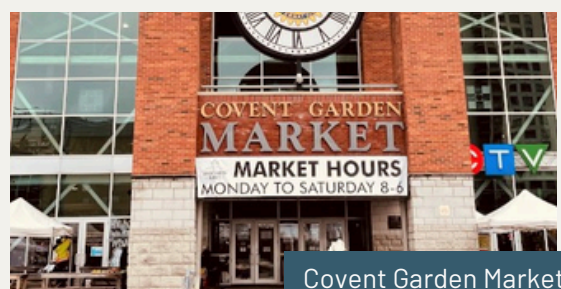
Fanshawe Conservation Area



Storybook Gardens



Heeman's greenhouse



Covent Garden Market

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### Got some extra cash:

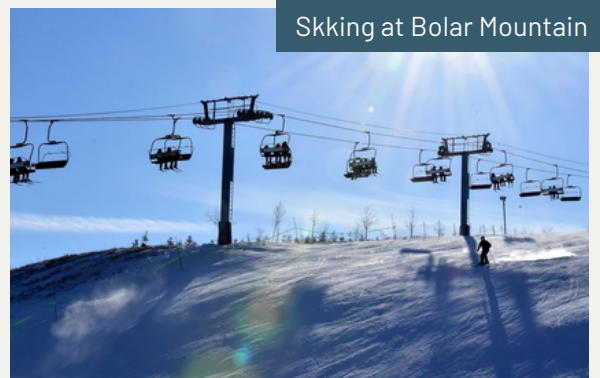
- [Rum Runners parties](#) - These are the **BEST clubbing experiences** I've had- they host about 1-2 a month, and the earlier you buy tickets in advance the cheaper it is. Just scroll through the Music Hall events page to find them. Currently, there's a Charli XCX Brat themed one on Jan. 31st (linked), and an Abba Disco themed one on February 8th. If you go to the Brat one, I'll see you there! TIPS: pre in advance because they charge a fortune for drinks, and they'll try to sell you bottled water instead of free cups unless you explicitly ask for tap water.
- [Escape rooms](#) - Hands down, best escape room company in London- and one you can actually escape from. They've got 4 rooms: Purgatory, Mario themed, Alice in Wonderland themed, and Atlantis. Trust me, the difficulty is just right, and it's clear that a lot of care went into designing these rooms.
- [Junction](#) - Rock climbing! They host **women's and LGBTQIA+ nights**, and have a **student discount** for day passes
- [Yoga](#)
  - [Laughing goat](#) - This place is in Thorndale, so you do need a vehicle to get there, but it's the only goat yoga place and looks super cute!
  - [Elements](#) - They have \$18 drop-ins for students
  - [ONE Dance Centre](#) - A drop-in dance studio offering classes in every style, including R&B, K-pop, jazz, ballet, contemporary, and heels for various levels of experience and taught by trained professionals.
  - [Pottery painting](#) - I've never been to Crock A Doodle, but they offer cute workshops to keep an eye out for, like the Valentine's day Date Night. They also do drop-ins and daily reservations.



Escape room

### Willing to splurge a little:

- [Skiing at Bolar Mountain](#) - London's very own ski slope! A lot of regular skiers say it's lame, but it's perfect for beginners and they do have some challenging triple black diamond slopes to work up to (that I still cannot do). The lodge is super cozy with great poutine.
- [Canada Life Place \(Bud Gardens\)](#) - The main stadium in Downtown London, hosts sports games and concerts yearound.
  - London Knights (can find tickets at the above link)
  - London Lightning (can find tickets at the above link)
- [Disney on Ice](#) - coming to London **January 23rd-26th!**
- [See a show at the Grand](#) - Over the next couple of months you can see "Heist", "The Secret to Good Tea", and "Waitress" (personally, I LOVE Waitress, it's a Broadway classic)
- [Flying Squirrel](#) - Indoor trampoline park
- [Factory](#) - Trampoline park and high ropes course, with arcade
- [Pottery workshops](#) - ranging from \$60-\$120



Skiing at Bolar Mountain



Disney on ice

**That's all I have for now! But I'd love to hear about any other fun spots you know of :) Feel free to comment on our Apple Team's instagram page if you have recommendations for us! Thanks for reading and have a wonderful year ahead!!**

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