

Study Tips for Finals

As finals approach, students often feel anxious, apprehensive, and allow themselves to become overwhelmed. First and foremost, **DON'T PANIC!** You've made it through the whole semester, and you will make it through this, too.

Much research has been done on effective study methods. Here are some tips to aid you in your preparation for final exams.

Before the Last Day of Class

1. If there is anything you don't understand, now is the time to ask.
2. Ask the professor about the final exam. He/she may be willing to give you tips on what will be covered by the exam, what will be emphasized, what type of exam it will be and other useful information on how to focus your studies.
3. If you don't already have a study group, see if others in your class would be willing to study with you or provide feedback, either in person, over the phone, or via email.

Study Tips

1. Find a good place to study. This may be in your room, but may not be if there are too many distractions (e.g., TV, phone, roommate, etc.). If your room isn't the best place, check out the lounges, the library, under a tree, etc.
2. Plan ahead. It is better to study some of the material over five to ten days than to try to study all of the material in one day.
3. Break up your study time into chunks of 20 to 50 minutes with a break in between. It does not necessarily need to be a long break: if you study 20 minutes, a 5- to 10-minute break will do. If you study longer, you will need a longer break. Three 20-minute study sessions are more effective than one 60-minute session.
4. During study breaks, do something else. Take a walk or jog, watch mindless TV (something you don't have to think about), read a novel, watch a funny movie, or eat a snack.
5. Jot down the most important points, formulas, etc. Do not recopy your notes; this will waste time.
6. For material that is difficult to master, devise a mnemonic by finding the key words in each point and arranging the letters into a sense or nonsense word or phrase. Some examples are:
 - a. What are the qualities of a scientist? (possible mnemonic answers: PIPOC or Parade Irish Poets Over Canada): Perseverance, Intelligence, Patience, Originality, and Curiosity.
 - b. Name the Seven Dwarves. (mnemonic answer: 2 D's; 2 S's; and 3 emotions): Doc, Dopey, Sneezy, Sleepy, Grumpy, Happy and Bashful.
7. Study actively. Repeat important concepts out loud, either to yourself or to your roommate or study buddy.

8. Ask yourself questions, or have someone else do it.
9. Do most of your studying during daylight or early evening hours.
10. Take time to eat. Concentrate on high-protein foods and not so many carbohydrates and sugars. Go easy on the caffeine; it may keep you alert initially, but you will crash eventually, possibly during the test, and feel worse than you did before ingesting all of that caffeine. Drink plenty of water (keep hydrated).
11. The night before the test, read through the most important material one more time; then GO TO SLEEP. This is not only so you get a good night's sleep; this will help you remember more of the information. By sleeping, you are allowing your brain to transfer the information to long-term memory. Studies find that most people retain more information if they go to sleep than if they continue to study or if they do something else, and also often remember more after they sleep than before they went to sleep.

The Day of the Test

1. If the test is early in the morning, set the alarm and use a back-up alarm as well.
2. Take a shower; it will wake you up and you will feel better.
3. Eat something; studies show that people perform better on tests if there is food in their stomachs. Eat some protein for a reliable source of fuel throughout the test, and go easy on carbohydrates and sugars. Avoid heavy foods; you don't want to get drowsy during the test.
4. Be careful about caffeine intake; you don't want to crash during the test.
5. Bring everything you need for the test to the exam room, such as a pen, pencil, paper or blue book.
6. Take some peppermints and a chilled bottle of water with you. Studies show that peppermint helps you concentrate. The cold water will keep you refreshed.
7. Plan to get to class at least five minutes early. If you're late or rushed, you will start the test under stress and on a negative note.
8. Go to the bathroom before the test.

Good Luck and study hard!

