

Top 10 Pointers for Surviving Finals

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- 1. LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS.** Take time to relax before and between exams; walks, bike rides and workouts are all great ways to release nervous tension and increase stamina. The Counseling and Mental Health Center has great resources for this topic (471-3515).
- 2. PLAN REWARDS.** Schedule a meal with friends, a movie, or a walk around Town Lake between finals, and plan a special treat for yourself when finals are over. These rewards will help keep you motivated and your spirits up.
- 3. DEAL WITH ANXIETY.** Decrease your anxiety by thinking of finals as a time to apply what you've learned all semester, rather than a problematic new experience. Also, try to avoid highly anxious or overly negative people: both anxiety and negativity are contagious.
- 4. SCHEDULE YOUR TIME CAREFULLY.** Set your schedule in advance, write it out, post it so you'll see it frequently, and stick to it. Be sure to include breaks in your schedule!
- 5. ALLOW LARGE BLOCKS OF TIME FOR STUDYING.** Schedule hour-long blocks of time for learning concepts and essential information.
- 6. USE SHORT PERIODS OF TIME FOR REVIEW.** Make use of the 15 minutes you spend walking across campus, or the 20 minutes you spend in the laundry room, to recall and review information. Remember: frequent reviews will help solidify information in your mind and improve your understanding.
- 7. VARY WHAT YOU STUDY.** You'll remain more alert and sharper if you study dissimilar subjects consecutively. Study chemistry first and French second, instead of chemistry first and physics second.
- 8. STICK TO YOUR REGULAR ROUTINE.** If you find you need extra time to study, resist the temptation to stay up all night; instead, try getting up a little earlier than usual. Your brain will reward you—it'll be better able to understand and recall information if it's not exhausted!
- 9. CRAM SELECTIVELY.** Cramming in tons of new information at the last minute will inevitably make you anxious, which will diminish your ability to recall information and synthesize material. But if you find yourself unprepared the night before, use what time you have to **review key concepts**. Establish hierarchies based on what you think will be on the exam, and concentrate on that material.
- 10. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** If you must stay up late, resist the temptation to overdo it with stimulants. Caffeine and nicotine, for example, can have adverse effects such as jitters, exhaustion, and mental fatigue if taken in too-large quantities. Never take drugs that are prescribed for someone else.

