

Exam Study Tips

- 1. Start reviewing regularly:** It's never too early to begin reviewing for exams. In fact, it is recommended you review your notes as soon as possible after each class so that the information is reinforced before it fades. This strategy means you will have less studying to do during exam periods and less stress.
- 2. Schedule regular study periods:** Create a study plan for each course, and commit to a regular schedule. Decide what your best study time is and study your most difficult subjects first.
- 3. Find a good place to study:** Study in a quiet, comfortable (but not too comfortable) location where distractions and interruptions are minimal. Make sure you have all the necessary materials with you.
- 4. Reduce exam anxiety:** Regular class attendance, planning, completing homework, review, practice, and study are the most effective strategies for reducing exam anxiety. If you have started studying well in advance, you are less likely to perceive an exam as a "threat." Eat right, get enough sleep, exercise, take time to relax, and reward yourself after completing a goal.
- 5. Study in small chunks of time:** A 1.5-hour block of studying followed by a 15-minute break works well for many people; a 1-hour block with a 10-minute break is another option. Find a system that works well for you and stick with it.
- 6. Avoid cramming and marathon study sessions:** Contrary to popular belief, staying up all night to study can be more detrimental to your success than getting proper rest. Give your brain some sleep so it can absorb what you have already studied. Regular, short study sessions are much more valuable.
- 7. Find out about the exam:** Gather information about the exam from the course syllabus, the instructor, and the teaching assistant. For example, will the exam include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, or essay questions? How many questions will be on the exam? What material will be covered? How long will you have to write the exam? Are you allowed to reference any materials during the exam? What is a particular exam worth in terms of your final grade? Knowing as much information as possible about an exam in advance allows you to prepare in a more focused manner and reduces anxiety.
- 8. Practice exam questions:** Ask your instructor for sample practice questions/exams. Topics that were stressed repeatedly in class are good candidates for exam questions. Predicting exam questions and trading them with others can be an effective group study activity.
- 9. Attend extra study sessions:** Consider attending Supplemental Instruction (SI), Exam Jam, and/or any other additional classes if they are offered.
- 10. Ask for help:** Don't hesitate to use your instructor's or teaching assistant's office hours to get extra help. Classmates are also good resources, as are peer tutors in the Academic Success Centre. But don't wait until the last minute! Be proactive and get help as soon as you notice you're struggling.
- 11. Put the exam in perspective:** Try to relax, and don't put too much pressure on yourself. Treating the exam as a challenge instead of a threat will increase your chance of success.