

Exam **GUIDE** Sta



How to Survive Exams

Tips for survival and success provided by the Academic Skills Center

Preparation

1. Set up a review schedule and stick to it.
2. **DO NOT CRAM.** Last minute studying can actually impair your memory, causing facts and ideas to scramble and anxiety to increase.
3. Maintain a normal schedule. Eat and sleep the way you normally do. Do not stay up all night studying or worrying.

The Day of the Exam

1. Eat a hearty breakfast.
2. Get to your exam early if possible. Make sure you have functioning pens, pencils, and books or notes (if they are allowed).
3. Sit where you usually sit. Studies have shown that this can improve your ability to recall information from that class.
4. Keep your distance from other students. Last-minute discussion of exam material can heighten anxiety and scramble facts.

During the Exam

1. Read the directions. Read the directions. Breathe. Read the directions again.
2. Do the easiest questions first.
3. If you have to guess, stick with the first answer that comes to you.

Most importantly, don't expect to know all the answers.

Food For Thought

Your parents had a reason for yelling, "Eat your breakfast!" as you ran out the door in the morning on your way to school. Arguably the most important meal of the day, breakfast is literally fuel for the body and the brain. A recent study reported by CNN shows that the timing of your first meal may be equally important. This study of 500 Israeli students shows that those who ate breakfast closer to test time (just ½ hour before) scored significantly higher than those who ate breakfast at home two hours earlier or those who didn't eat at all.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

To do your best when exams roll around it's important to manage your stress. Here are some tips:

1. Plan each day to include a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise. You may find that a certain form of exercise is essential for stress reduction.
2. Try to get a minimum of 6 hours of sleep per night.
3. Eat healthy! Try to eat 3 balanced meals a day during times of stress. Make sure you get enough fiber intake.
4. Avoid alcohol and drugs as these substances can cause headaches, depression, and anxiety.
5. Take a break from studying when you realize that you are feeling burned out. Try meditation or visualization, or take an "ice cream" break.
6. Take a warm bath or shower to relieve tight muscles or insomnia.

Do's and Don't for Midterm Munching

DO:



Eat plenty of carbohydrates. Carbs are your body's basic energy source. A recent study by the University of Toronto found that eating common carbohydrates, like mashed potatoes, might improve memory for up to an hour after ingestion.



Fillet a fish. Fish and other foods rich in DHA (dehydroepiandrosterone acetate) may boost your brainpower according to a 2002 article from *Psychology Today*. Fish is packed with protein and omega-3 fatty acids which will keep you mentally alert and focused.



Indulge in naturally fatty foods! Naturally fatty foods contain choline which may improve memory according to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*. Some foods with significant amounts of choline are milk, liver, eggs, and peanuts.



Eat five-a-day. Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals to your diet such as vitamin C, vitamin A, fiber, and hundreds of phytochemicals, all of which are essential to keeping your body going according to WebMD (www.webmd.com).



Drink yourself into oblivion. Water that is. You should drink 8 eight-ounce glasses of water every day. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink water- by then you are already dehydrated. Dehydration can lead to a host of problems you do not need during midterms including fatigue, fever, diarrhea, and lightheadedness.