

University of Alabama at Birmingham

# FINAL EXAM STRATEGIES

**A FEW TIPS** *To Help*  
*You Know More Than*  
**Just Your Name**  
*On The Test!*

**BELIEVE you can**  
and you're halfway there

Theodore Roosevelt

*Nothing* is impossible.  
The word itself says *I'm possible.*  
-Audrey Hepburn



# THE 8 BEST SCIENTIFIC STUDY TIPS



- 1. Say NO to Cramming:** Study in intervals! Studying in 20-50 minute increments and giving yourself 5-10 minutes in between is more beneficial than cramming studies show.
- 2. Say YES to Cardio:** Science says that just 20 minutes of cardio (dancing, jogging or walking) can improve your memory and reduce the effects of stress.
- 3. Eat Superfoods/Antioxidants:** Everybody knows you should eat breakfast the day of a big test. Research suggests that high-carb, high-fiber, slow-digesting foods are best. When you study, your brain consumes glucose, so take a five-minute break every hour to let your body produce more fuel for your studying. Eating a healthy snack is very beneficial and can make a significant difference (almonds, fruit, and yogurt are good choices).
- 4. Alternate Study Spots:** Shake up your finals routine! Spending all night in the library can be draining. Simply alternating the room where a person studies improves retention research shows. Try alternating your spots—the library, a study room, and a quiet coffee house.
- 5. Time Management:** Cramming causes anxiety, which lowers your ability to retain information. By creating a balanced study plan and schedule, you will be able to study each subject in its entirety and ultimately boost your test performance.
- 6. Avoid the All-Nighter:** Almost every college student pulls an all-nighter, but it is a bad idea. A 2008 study found that all-nighters impair reasoning and memory for as long as four days! So, get a good night's sleep and expect to perform better on tests.
- 7. MINIMIZE Distractions:** Research shows that while many young people prefer to study while listening to music, texting friends, or watching television, they are less likely to retain information that way. If you must listen to music, stick to instrumental!
- 8. MAXIMIZE practice-testing:** You may have thought highlighting, re-reading and summation would be effective ways to study. Think again! A 2013 study found that these techniques do not boost students' performance. Practice testing through flashcards, or taking practice exams was observed to be a highly effective studying technique. Check out Quizlet!



PLANNER

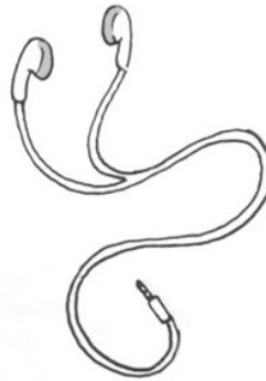
Make the most of those long study sessions by making sure you pack all of the necessities (besides your books, of course!).

## HOT COFFEE



## Study Tip

Take at least one five minute break an hour so that you can gather your thoughts and let your brain relax.



HEADPHONES + CHARGERS



COZY SOCKS



SWEET STUDY TREATS



Take a Bath



Listen to Music



Take a Nap



Go to a body of water



Watch the clouds



Light a candle



REST  
your legs up on a wall



Let out a sigh



Fly a Kite

Watch the stars



Write a Letter



Learn something NEW

Listen to a guided relaxation



Read a Book



# 50 Ways to Take a Break



sit in NATURE

2x Move twice as slowly



Take Deep Belly Breaths

MEDITATE



WRITE in a journal



Walk Outside

Notice your Body



Call a Friend



Meander around Town

Buy some Flowers



Find a relaxing scent



Shhh! Eat a meal in SILENCE

Go for a run



Take a bike ride



Pet a furry creature

Create your own coffee break



View some ART

Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes



Turn off all electronics



Go to a park



Go to a Farmer's Market



Forgive Someone



read or watch something FUNNY



Engage in small acts of KINDNESS



COLOR with Crayons



Make some MUSIC



Climb a Tree



Let go of something



Do some gentle stretches



Paint on a surface other than paper



Write a quick poem



Read poetry



Put on some music and DANCE



Give Thanks





## UNDERSTAND WHAT THE TEST WANTS FROM YOU

Often we think of tests only from our own point of view as students - you tend to think of the demands it makes on you and whether you can answer the questions. But it's also important to look at tests from the point-of-view of your instructors. For them, the test is not a stressful exercise, but an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know. Under the pressure of trying to remember all the material a course has presented, it's easy to forget that tests try to measure application and not memory. Understanding what tests in college really want from you is part of taking them well!

## MANAGE YOUR TEST-TAKING TIME

If you find that you consistently don't have enough time to finish exams, the problem may partly be how you're taking the test. Many students start writing as soon as they receive the test. Ironically, this can be one of the reasons students have trouble finishing an exam on time. This strategy may help you manage your test time: When you receive the test, take 5 or 10 minutes to look the whole thing over. Make sure you've read the directions and the questions thoroughly. Once you have an overview of the test, you need to decide which questions you can answer easily, which questions you're feeling shaky about and which questions you can only guess at.



# EXAM DAY TIPS

1. **ARRIVE EARLY.** Know the location and time of your exam. Arrive early to have enough time to settle down before the exam starts.
2. **BE AWAKE FOR THE TEST.** Get a good night's sleep, shower, chew gum, or have a caffeinated drink.
3. **EAT A SMALL BREAKFAST.** It'll be more difficult to concentrate if you're hungry. But don't eat anything that may upset your stomach.
4. **BRING EXTRA WRITING UTENSILS.** You never know when your pencil is going to break or your pen is going to run out of ink.
5. **BRING ALL ESSENTIAL TEST MATERIALS.** Calculator, Notes (if allowed), etc.
6. **GO TO THE BATHROOM.** Self-explanatory to minimize distractions during the test.
7. **WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHES.** You'll want to be comfortable taking the test.
8. **BRING ANY NECESSITIES.** Bring water, tissues, cough drops, etc.
9. **LOOK OVER YOUR NOTES.** Review important information again before the test to refresh your memory.
10. **IT'S JUST A TEST.** Remember that you studied hard and have confidence in yourself! **YOU ARE A LOT SMARTER THAN YOU REALIZE!**

 **Good**  
**luck**

