

- ◆ Avoid large amounts of caffeine and other types of stimulants including alcoholic beverages.
- ◆ Be sure to eat something healthy so you have energy to get through the exam.

### How to Deal with the Stress

Dealing with the stress of taking an exam is difficult, but the stress level goes up with final exams. Many factors cause the stress including poor study habits, previous poor test grades, personal difficulties, and being afraid of failing.

### Listed below are some ways to deal with the stress.

- ⇒ Be prepared.
- ⇒ Get plenty of sleep.
- ⇒ Avoid massive amounts of caffeine.
- ⇒ Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- ⇒ Avoid negative thoughts. Negative thoughts will only bring more stress. The power of positive thinking can help you make it through the exam and allow you to recall the information you have learned.
- ⇒ Avoid discussing the exam before taking it. Other students' anxiety may rub off on you.
- ⇒ Take your time while taking the exam.
- ⇒ Breathe and relax. (Talk with a counselor about a breathing exercise that will help.)
- ⇒ Listen to soothing music while studying. This will help your mind stay focused on your studies and not on your stress.

- ⇒ Study with a study group. This will give you support during this stressful time.
- ⇒ Do the best you can.
- ⇒ Counselors are available to help you in managing the stress of taking exams.

Good luck with your final exams.

For assistance please contact:

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### References

[http://www.unc.edu/depts/unc\\_caps/examprep.htm](http://www.unc.edu/depts/unc_caps/examprep.htm)

<http://www.eiu.edu/~Irnasst/finals.htm>

<http://www.sju.edu/~bcutler/memory.htm>

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## Pathways to College Success



## Surviving Final Exams

## Preparing for Final Exams

- ◆ **Know dates, times, and places for exams.** The schedule for finals is posted on the GCSC website each semester and should be listed on your course syllabus. Check with your instructor if not sure.
- ◆ **Plan time wisely.** Start as early as possible and create a study plan. Use a calendar and budget your time.
- ◆ **Start reviewing for exams at least three weeks prior to the exam.** This gives you time to review in small increments.
- ◆ **Set priorities of what you need to study.** Determine what is the most important and what will likely be covered on the test. If you have a review - go with that.
- ◆ **Make sure you know what kind of exam it will be** - essay, objective, or combination.
- ◆ **Know how to study.** Create flashcards, study guides, practice test questions (remember how your instructor asks his or her questions), and charts. Follow basic study habits. For objective exams study as if it was an essay exam. Stress specifics such as a list of items or definitions. For essay exams stress concepts. Prepare an outline and practice writing from it. For problem exams memorize formulas and rules and then practice different problems. Practice taking an exam by using old test and/or making up your own test.
- ◆ **Maintain a positive attitude.**

## Tips for Remembering

- ⇒ Mnemonics, memory devices, are useful for instant recall but should be used with caution. You remember the acronym but not what it stands for and get the answer wrong.
- ⇒ Use the senses you learn best with. (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) Being able to see something from a chart or to hear something you have said out loud many times helps when recalling information.
- ⇒ Practice the information in the way it is being tested. Knowing the information orally does not mean you can write an essay.

## Cramming for Tests

Although cramming is not the best method for studying for an exam, it may be necessary if proper study habits have not been used. Listed below are the pros and cons of cramming for a test.

### Pros of Cramming for a Test:

- ◆ Cramming is used only as a last resort to make the most out of a bad situation

### Cons of Cramming for a Test:

- ◆ Cramming will not work if you are cramming for more than one subject.
- ◆ Cramming is used only for short-term recall. You are just recalling information for the moment.
- ◆ Cramming requires much more work than studying a little at a time. You are trying to learn a lot of information in a short time and it causes much more stress.

## Last Minute Studying Tips

- ◆ **Maintain a positive attitude.** Do not beat yourself up for not studying earlier. Keep a positive attitude and keep focused on your studies.
- ◆ **Make choices.** Pick out the most important information and know it well. (There is no way you can learn it all.) If the instructor provides a review, stay with this information.
- ◆ **Make flash cards/charts.** With flash cards you can recite the material over and over again. Saying the information out loud helps to recall the information. Use charts to visualize the information. If it is a math related exam, then work many different problems over and over.
- ◆ **Take frequent, short breaks while studying.** The mind can only handle so much information. Study for 20 to 40 minutes and then take a five minute break.
- ◆ **Relax and get some sleep.** Staying up all night will not help you to recall information. Make sure you are fully alert when taking the exam in order to recall as much information as possible. Being tired will just add to the anxiety level. **Just do the best you can!!!**

