

**Student Success Center
9th Street Hall**

8 Test Preparation Hints

**THE #1 TEST PREPERATION TECHNIQUE
IS TO KNOW THE MATERIAL WELL!**

1. Prepare for exams from the first day of class.

2. Recite notes aloud from memory.

Reciting is not only vital for studying, but also for memory storage. There are two forms of memory storage. Short term memory refers to limited, short lived information stored for a short period of time, merely seconds. Long term memory references memory that is information that is virtually limitless and can be remembered from days to decades later. Each reciting of information further increases the amount of information transferred from the short term memory to the long term memory. One of the best ways to increase memory recall during reciting is to organize the material into a main argument and supporting clauses then try to recall the information without looking. Afterwards, check the information for accuracy and retention. Read aloud any incorrectly recited material and go through this process repeatedly until it is recited correctly from memory, then move on the next idea.

3. Review notes on a regular basis.

A good standard is to review notes daily or every other day. This review improves memory, reduces test anxiety, and allows time between reviews for the information to consolidate (gel) in the mind. Proper spacing out reviews also results in better recall at test time. It is normal to forget material when taking tests when notes are reviewed only once, twice, or none at all.

4. Re-write notes after each lecture.

Do not passively copy your notes from lecture. Copying notes without conscious effort is a waste of time. Take this active approach instead. Condense main idea and clarifying details into an organized format that promotes speed, as well as learning. Afterword, turn main ideas into questions and conversely, turn details into answers. You can also make flash cards from these questions and answers, by putting one of each on a note card. Follow this method with both lecture notes and notes from textbooks.

5. Self-test

Use a self-testing method that can accurately judge how much material has been learned and what material should be reinforced before an exam. It is important to this early enough before an exam to allow for something to be done about it.

6. Pay attention to clues for ideas and material that are likely to appear on exam.

Did the instructor narrow down potential testable material? What clues were given about what may appear on the test? Were sample test questions or review sheets provided? How much time was devoted to each topic? What questions did the instructor ask in class? What did the instructor repeat?



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7. Check for access to previous exams and quizzes self-test

Checking past exams and quizzes will better prepare you for exams, by knowing how test questions may be constructed and the type of information the instructors believe is important for you to know.

8. Utilize study groups.

Study groups provide opportunities to check the completeness and accuracy of notes with others and to quiz each other. Material is also reinforced when you are forced to break it down and explain it to your study group. Research shows that study group members typically earn higher grades than non-study group counterparts. Start a study group if there are none available.

