

Improve Exam Performance

"Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." ~ Conrad Hilton

Organize

Assess how well you are handling the material.

About a week before the exam, decide if you need to see your professor, teaching assistant, or tutor for a review session.

Organize your study materials into a set of exam notes.

For engineering, math, and science classes, create a formula sheet.

Create a special study schedule to make sure you cover all the material.

Post this schedule above your desk, and refer to it daily!

Create a study group if you don't already belong to one.

With your study group, teach each other difficult concepts, and review old exams. If you would like a peer tutor to guide the discussion stop by Academic Support Resources and inquire about Study Group + 1.

Find an ideal study environment.

Look for a distraction free and comfortable location to study. Consider if you work best in complete silence or with background music or noise.

Practice

Use a practice exam to assess what you know and what you need to review.

After you've studied, use a practice exam to test your readiness for the real exam. Practice exams are often provided by the professor or TA. Use only what will be available on the exam. You want to test if you know the material.

Don't underestimate the difficulty level of a multiple-choice exam.

College professors write multiple-choice exams that go far beyond asking literal information. Make sure you really know the information and are able to utilize it on application based questions. Don't simply expect to recognize answers on the test items.

Learn by teaching others

Explaining concepts to a classmate or friend is a great way to make sure you understand the material yourself. When you find new ways to explain a concept, you are mastering the information by processing it for others.

Reward

Reward yourself at the end of each study day and after an exam.

If you feel that you are constantly sacrificing everything else in your life to study, you won't stick to your study schedule. Rewards can be as simple as talking with a friend or as involved as a weekend trip. No one else will reward you for sticking to your study schedule, so be your own advocate.

Reflect

When exams are returned, don't just pay attention to the grade.

A graded exam, even one with a low grade, will help you prepare for the next exam. If the professor doesn't return the exam, make an appointment to review your exam during office hours. Ask the professor to go over the exam with you.

Decide how much time you really did study for the exam.

Did you stick to your study schedule? Was your study plan effective?

Were you anxious when you took the exam?

Arrange to see a staff member in Academic Support Resources or University Counseling Services to learn some strategies for handling stress in and out of the classroom.

Review your exam with a staff member in Academic Support Resources.

You may find a pattern to your test-taking. Questions to ask include:

- Did the exam questions come from class notes, reading notes, homework assignments, or group assignments?
- Did you miss more questions from a particular source of information?
- What types of questions did you have problems with? For instance, did you have problems with questions that used the word "except"?
- Did you miss questions that required you to interpret or apply the information?



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