

5-day study plan

taking tests

Make It Happen:

time management
concentration
reading
listening
memory
taking tests
writing papers
self-regulation
learning styles
motivation

Use this 5-day study plan to get ahead of the game when studying for an exam, test, or final. If you spread your review over several days, you'll avoid cramming, and you'll find that you're a more successful test taker.

Count backwards from the exam date, and set aside time each day for review during your most alert hours. Make a list of chapters, lecture topics, and outside readings to be covered in the exam. Then, **divide the material into five sections**; cover one each day.

5 Days Before the Exam

- Review notes to discover if you are missing information from lectures or chapters. Complete reading and obtain missing material.
- Locate your study guide—or create one of your own. This will ensure that you cover all of the material.
- Review one section of the material, starting with the oldest material. Use your textbook and lecture notes.
- Use active study strategies, such as creating flashcards for vocabulary or dates.

4 Days Before the Exam

- Do a 5-minute review of the first section of material.
- Meet with a study group to review the second “chunk” of the material.
- Use active study strategies, such as predicting test questions. Create possible essay, short answer, or multiple choice questions, and then practice answering them.

3 Days Before the Exam

- Do a 10-minute review of all of the material you've studied so far.
- Review the third section of the material and then quiz yourself on what you've studied.
- Use active study strategies, such as summarizing the chapters or concepts verbally or in writing.

You're ahead of the game if you start studying 5 days before the exam. But what about test anxiety and other test-taking tips? The Center for Learning has information about these and other resources.

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2 Days Before the Exam

- Do a 15-minute review of the material you've studied so far.
- Review the fourth section of the material, creating mnemonic devices (memory tricks) to remember details.
- Use active study strategies, such as creating mind maps or other visual representations of the material.

1 Day Before the Exam

- Do a quick 10-minute review of all of the material you've studied so far.
- Review the last section of the material.
- Use active study strategies, such as covering up the material and rewriting definitions from memory.
- Return to your study guide. Spend 10 minutes writing or speaking about the concepts of each of the 5 sections you have reviewed (50 minutes total).
- Go to bed early. Lack of sleep accounts for most problems with concentration and memory.

Where Were Your Gaps?

After the exam, use this quick reflection tool to determine where you need to supplement your review process for next time. If you can identify your areas of greatest difficulty, you can work to effectively correct the problems.

- I didn't understand the material when it was being explained in class.
- I did not remember encountering some of the material in class or in the text.
- I did not study long enough or start early enough.
- I didn't study the right material.
- I studied the material but could not recall it for the test.
- I recognized the information but was not able to use or apply it.
- I memorized the definitions but was unable to use or apply concepts.
- I didn't know the meaning of some of the vocabulary used on the test.
- I didn't follow directions or record my answers correctly.
- I didn't use my time well during the test.
- I was too anxious/worried/upset/frustrated to concentrate.

You're ahead of the game if you start studying 5 days before the exam. But what about text anxiety and other test-taking tips? The Center for Learning has information about these and other resources.