

EXAM PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Physical Preparation

The way you treat your body during exams directly affects your performance on exams. Even if you aren't consciously aware of the effects, you will have trouble remembering facts and writing your exam. There will be that one concept you can't remember, or that sentence which will be badly written and cost you half a mark.

Always make sure that you prepare physically for an exam. Your body is a machine which is used to certain patterns and schedules. Don't interrupt these for an exam.

- Sleep well and get your normal amount of sleep (hopefully around 8 hours).
- Maintain your sleep schedule. If you normally sleep at midnight and wake up at 8am, keep doing that. Don't pull late night study sessions or all-nighters; they will have a negative effect on your body.
- Maintain your exercise schedule. If your body is used to jogging every morning, make sure it gets that jog. If you don't normally exercise, don't start now.
- Maintain your eating habits. Don't skip any meals and eat healthy.

Mental Preparation

Just as important as physical preparation is your mental preparation. You cannot cram for an exam and expect to do well. Properly preparing yourself for an exam is vital to your success.

Remember:

- Study in advance. This will move information to long term memory, and you will have less pre-exam stress and anxiety.
- Don't rush. Look over your study notes calmly and with focus, rushing will only mean you absorb less information and need to study longer overall.
- Clarify all the details in advance. Know what sort of questions to expect, where the exam will be held, etc.
- Have a positive attitude. Being positive about the outcome will always lead you to do better on any examination. It will also make studying a whole lot easier. Remind yourself why you need good grades, or why you are interested in the subject.

Physical and mental preparation for an exam is all about balance. If you study so much that you forget to eat or sleep well, you are hurting your ability to do well on an exam. If you study so much that you burn out, you will do just as badly as if you hadn't studied at all. Remember to take breaks. Just because it's an exam period doesn't mean you can't hang out with friends, or go for that jog, or take an hour off to prepare a nice meal. To accomplish these activities, time management is essential. You must be able to work out an effective study schedule and start your studying early. You should block out time to study and make sure to take regular breaks.

Dealing with more than one exam

Students are not always able to have their exams easily spread out across the exam period. Sometimes you will have two exams in 48 hours or a lot of exams in a very short period. This situation is unavoidable, and you

must adjust your studying accordingly. It is these moments when time management and calm study habits are especially important. Don't stress out, approach your multiple exams as calmly as you can, but do realize that you will have to study in a much more focused manner.