Test Preparation Guide

To do well on tests you must first learn the material, and then review it before the test.

## Learning
- Take good notes in your class lectures and textbooks
- Review your notes soon after class/lecture
- Review notes briefly before the next class
- Schedule some time at the end of the week for a longer review

## Reviewing
- **Take good notes** about what your teacher tells you what will be on the test
- **Organize your notes, texts, and assignments** according to what will be on the test
- **Estimate the hours** you’ll need to review materials
- **Draw up a schedule** that blocks units of time and material
- **Test yourself** on the material
- **Finish your studying** the day before the exam

### Anticipate Test Content
- Pay attention to any study guides
- Ask the instructor what to anticipate on the test
- Review previous tests
- Pay particular attention in class just prior to exam, especially when an instructor:
  - Says something more than once
  - Writes material on the board
  - Asks questions of the class
  - Says, “This will be on the test!”

### When you Take a Test

#### Prepare
- Pack your bag with all needed materials the night before
- Get plenty of sleep the night before
- Grab a light snack before the test
- Chewing gum can relieve stress
- Arrive early for tests
- Stay relaxed and confident

#### Test Taking
- Read the direction carefully!
- Quickly look through the test for an overview
- Write down any formulas or material you have memorized in the margin of the test
- Take several slow deep breaths
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure what a questions is asking for
- Review your answers before submitting

#### Answer Questions in a Strategic Order
1. Answer easy questions first
2. Then questions with the most point value
3. Then difficult questions
4. Review
5. Proofread spelling, grammar, punctuation, decimals points, etc.

- On objective tests, eliminate/cross-out obvious incorrect answers.
- On essay tests, broadly outline your answer and sequence of points.

### Review Tools
- Create study checklists of all material that you will be tests on
- Record your notes – this will enable you to study while walking, working out, on your commute, or relaxing in a nonacademic environment
- Create flashcards
- Go to all review sessions

### Organize for Test Taking
- Begin reviewing early (days, not hours!)
- Conduct short daily review sessions
- Read text assignments before lectures
- Review notes immediately after lectures
- Review with a study group
- Visit instructor office hours to clear up any confusion
- Break up the study tasks into manageable chunks
- Study the most difficult material when you are alert
Ways to Reduce Test Anxiety

Here are some things that may help reduce your test anxiety provided by Mayo Clinic:

1. **Establish a consistent pre-test routine.**
   Learn what works for you, and follow the same steps each time you're getting ready to take a test. This will ease your stress level and help assure you that you're well prepared.

2. **Learn relaxation techniques.**
   There are a number of things you can do right before and during the test to help you stay calm and confident, such as deep breathing, relaxing your muscles one at a time, or closing your eyes and imagining a positive outcome.

3. **Don't forget to eat and drink.**
   Just like muscles in your body, your brain needs fuel to function. Eat the day of the test so that you're not running on empty when test time arrives. Also, drink plenty of water. Avoid sugary drinks such as soda pop, which can cause your blood sugar to peak and then drop, or caffeinated beverages such as energy drinks or coffee, which can increase anxiety.

4. **Get some exercise.**
   Regular aerobic exercise and exercising on exam day can release tension.

5. **Get plenty of sleep.**
   Sleep is directly related to academic performance.

6. **Talk to your teachers.**
   Make sure you understand what's going to be on each test and know exactly how to prepare. In addition, let your teachers know that you feel anxious when you take tests. He or she may have suggestions to help you succeed.

7. **Don't ignore a learning disability.**
   Test anxiety may improve by addressing an underlying condition that interferes with the ability to learn, focus or concentrate, for example, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or dyslexia. In many cases, a student diagnosed with a learning disability is entitled to help with test taking, such as extra time to complete a test or having questions read aloud.

8. **See a professional counselor.**
   A professional counselor can help you work through feelings, thoughts and behaviors that cause or worsen anxiety. Contact Student Health & Counseling Services (916-278-6461).