



A Finals Survival Guide

As end-of-semester tests approach, pump up your studies and lower your stress levels with organization, exercise, sleep, and healthy eating habits.

> BY CALLIE SCHWEITZER, SENIOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

With a heavy swim team practice schedule and a full class load, Julia Gregos, now a senior at the University of Akron in Ohio, found it hard to set aside time to study for final exams when she started college. Her college exams required much more comprehensive studying than her high school tests. "There was more information to learn in college," says Gregos. "Almost like the amount of information you learn through high school is an outline for what you learn in college."

But Gregos was proactive. She sought the help of college tutors and found study habits (like rewriting her class notes) that helped her prepare for the big exams.

As the semester comes to an end and the thought of winter vacation creeps into your mind, you may start to lose the ability to

study effectively for finals. And if you're like many students, you may wait until the last minute to prepare for the tests that count heavily toward your final grade.

✓ Power Up With Proper Prep

In a survey of 1,048 college students conducted by *Student Health 101*, nearly 83% said they experience more stress than usual during finals time. To reduce anxiety, these proven techniques for finals preparation can help:

1. Establish priorities. "Succeeding with finals takes daily study," says **Robert Neuman**, former associate dean of academic advising at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and author of *Are You Really Ready For College?* "You must keep up with the readings, take notes on what you've read, study them, make charts and flash cards, reread the chapters, and re-

STUDENT VIEWS

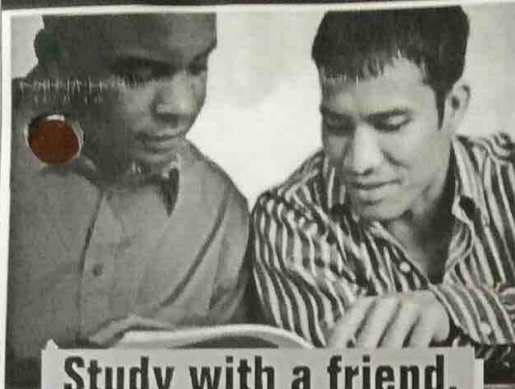


SCROLL over to see Gabby Emslie at Boston University share her tips to help get through finals.

view your old notes."

It's also vital to honestly assess your own academic performance so far, says Neuman, and answer these three important questions 2 to 3 weeks before finals:

- What is my grade at this point in the semester? You should know where you stand grade-wise. If you don't, talk to your professors.
- How much will the final exam count toward my overall grade? Knowing this for each



Study with a friend.

of your classes will help you decide how to best divide up your study time.

- Will the final exam cover the whole semester or only material since the last major test? You want to focus only on the material you absolutely need to know.

"The answers to these questions will show you how much material you must review and how much time you must reserve to study before the test," says Neuman.

2. Study with a friend. "There is great strength in a team," says Debbie Mandel, author of *Addicted to Stress* and a stress management specialist in Lawrence, New York. About 3 out of 5 students in the

Student Health 101 survey said studying with someone is a huge help in finals preparation.

Betsy Maguire, a senior at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut, says she studies with her roommate, who is also majoring in nursing. "We talk information over, draw on whiteboards, and classify pertinent medications," she says. "I use peers in my class to bounce ideas off of."

3. Make use of on-campus tutoring. Both Gregos and Maguire say on-campus tutoring was key to their finals success. Maguire says she found the campus resources to be especially helpful for English finals, while Gregos says she benefited from the group sessions they offered.

4. Stay organized. "Being organized by making a list of what has to be done and having a quiet, relatively neat workplace and orderly files sets the scene for productive studying," says Dr. Kenneth Herman, a clinical psychologist in Wyckoff, New Jersey. "Also, study

STUDENT VIEWS



SCROLL over to see Nicholas Paxton at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater talk about how to survive final exams.

To learn the **5 R's** for dealing with stress, **CLICK HERE.**

far in advance and be well rested to do well on tests."

Stephanie Mansour, a certified life coach in Chicago, Illinois, suggests creating an action plan. "Instead of procrastinating, write down the exact order of how you're going to study for an exam," she says. "If you are a major procrastinator, map out one step you will take each day or hour leading up to the test and check this step off once you've completed it."

5. Sharpen your test-taking skills. Ask your professor for copies of

TELL US YOUR STORY



What are your secrets for last-minute finals preparation?

CLICK here to share your story.

Meg, a student at University of Missouri, writes...

Prepare ahead of time. The amount of material is less overwhelming if you have been dealing with it for a couple of weeks.