

Prepping for Finals – Make a Game Plan!

1. Start early and make a *Final Exam Game Plan*.

If you plan out study sessions (for ALL your exams), you'll get a better handle on how much work you're facing and how many weeks in advance to start studying.

- Determine the format of each exam. This affects how you study and how much time is needed: Cumulative? Not-cumulative? Multiple choice? Short answer? Writing or analyzing code?
- Use your **Engineered for Success** academic planner (get one for **free** outside Brown-Kopel 1155) to backward plan from the exam date to ensure you have enough time to be fully prepared.

2. Study in this order: a) definitely, b) probably, c) might be on the final.

Don't just start from the beginning of your notes and try to cram everything in. Think about what will **definitely** be on each test and review that material first. Then move on to studying what will **probably** be on the test, then what **might** be covered. That way, if you run out of time, you have the basics nailed. Hint: predict test questions and write your own!

3. Give yourself more time to study for your toughest classes – seek help from tutors.

If physics gave you trouble all semester, devote more time to that subject. Look over your previous tests. If you scored poorly on one unit, chances are you didn't absorb it all the first time. (Hint: if you scored 40% on a test, you only learned 40% of the material!).

- Take extra time to review what you missed earlier in the term. By starting with the toughest stuff first, you'll have time to ask your instructor questions or get help from a **tutor** or study group.
- Plan tutoring appointments in advance. **As you get closer to exams, the appointments can fill up.**

4. Form a study group.

Make a plan with friends to review material, compare notes, or work through tricky concepts. You'll benefit from the good study habits & notes of others. If you're trying to solve a tough problem, two heads are better than one.

- Be careful that your study group does not turn into a party group. Plan time to have fun **after** exams.
- Be creative in your group: Make flash cards to memorize dates and equations. Or create a mnemonic device — a system of memorizing facts using a silly phrase or acronym you'll definitely remember.

5. Talk, Teach, and Take Quizzes

- Not only is it more fun to study with friends than studying alone, you'll learn more. By talking through concepts you're thinking about the material more deeply, which means you'll remember it better later. **Hint: If you can seamlessly TEACH the material out loud to someone else, you understand it and can more easily produce it on an exam.** Don't have a study group or friend to teach? Make a free tutoring appointment and teach the tutor, asking them to check your understanding.
- Ask a friend to quiz you on the information you've studied. Or write a mock exam in your study group. Research shows you'll remember the information you've been quizzed on better than information you simply review alone.

8. Study in a cycle to include breaks.

Take breaks to improve your concentration, motivation and focus. Study in a cycle every day:

- Plan what you will study (1 - 2 minutes) – this establishes focus and a goal for the session.
- Study (30 - 45 minutes) – interact with the material (memorize, summarize, work problems, etc.).
- Break (5 - 10 minutes) – step away from all devices and material to clear your head.
- Recap (5 minutes) – review, summarize, wrap-up & check your understanding of what you just studied.
- Choose (1 - 2 minutes) – Should you continue studying? Take a break? Change to a different subject?
- Repeat the cycle!

9. Make personal WELLNESS a priority.

- Eat healthy and drink plenty of water to keep your brain firing on all cylinders.
- While it may be tempting to pull an all-nighter and cram everything in at the last minute, it's a bad idea. You just add stress to your life, and you won't retain the information for very long by studying that way.



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