

The Five Day Study Plan

Start Early: More than any other technique, the key to performing well on exams is starting early and using short, frequent study sessions. The human brain learns academic material faster and better on an exam if done in brief blocks of time spread out over longer periods of time, rather than in a few lengthy sessions. For example, you will perform better on an exam if you spend one hour studying each day for 20 days than if you spend 10 hours studying each day for two days before an exam.

On Cramming: If you have to cram, try to focus on remembering the information you do know rather than trying to teach yourself new information. You will typically not remember what you tried to learn the night before the exam, anyway, so it is best to make sure you REALLY know some part of the information for the test. If you do have a few days, try to spread the studying out so you are not doing it all in one night.

If you plan ahead, many students have found the Five Day Study Plan gets good results. Keys to the Five Day Plan:

1. You space out your learning over a period of 5 days.
2. During each day, you prepare a new chapter or chunk of information, then review previous material.
3. Divide material so you can work on it in chunks.
4. Use active learning strategies (writing and reciting) to study the material
5. Use self-testing techniques to monitor your learning

Eight to ten hours of studying may be required to get an A or a B on an exam. This is just a general guideline. You may need to allot more or less time depending on the difficulty of the class.

How to Make a Five Day Plan

1. Break the material into chunks. If it can be divided by chapter, use that. If not, make up your own chunks based on the structure of the material.
2. Plan to spend about 2 hours studying on each of the five days.
3. You work on the material in 2 ways: You prepare, and you review.

Example of the Time Frame for the Five Day Plan:

Tuesday		
Prepare	1 st chunk	2 hours <i>1 chunk</i>
Wednesday		
Prepare	2 nd chunk	2 hours
Review	1 st chunk	30 minutes
Thursday		
Prepare	3 rd chunk	1-1/2 hours
Review	2 nd chunk	30 minutes
Review	1 st chunk	15 minutes
Friday		
Prepare	4 th chunk	1 hour
Review	3 rd chunk	30 minutes
Review	2 nd chunk	15 minutes
Review	1 st chunk	10 minutes
Sunday		
Review	4 th chunk	30 minutes
Review	3 rd chunk	20 minutes
Review	2 nd chunk	10 minutes
Review	1 st chunk	10 minutes
Self-Test		1 hour

Examples of Preparation Strategies and Review Strategies

Preparation Strategies

Develop study sheets
Develop concept maps
Make word cards
Make question cards
Make formula cards
Make problem cards
Make self-tests
Do study guides
Re-mark text material
Make a list of 20 topics that would be on the exam
Define the list of 20
Do problem
Outline
Summarize material
Chart related material
List steps in the process
Predict essay questions
Plan essay answers
Write essay answers
Answer questions at the end of the chapter
Prepare material for study group

Review Strategies

Recite study sheets
Replicate concept maps
Recite word cards
Recite question cards
Practice writing formulas
Work problems
Take self-tests
Practice study guide info out loud
Take notes on re-marked text
Recite list of 20
Do "missed" problems
Recite main points from outline
Recite notes from recall cues
Recite out loud
Re-create chart from memory
Recite steps from memory
Answer essay questions
Practice reciting main points
Write essay answers from memory
Recite answers
Explain material to group members or study partners