



Washington State University

## Tips for Finals

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### Tips for Studying for Finals

by Greg Urquhart, Retention Counselor

With finals coming up, stress is sure to follow. With this in mind, I thought I would use this opportunity to remind you of some great techniques for getting through finals. For those of you who struggle with studying for tests there are two really great techniques which you can use to increase your study skills and knowledge of the test material.

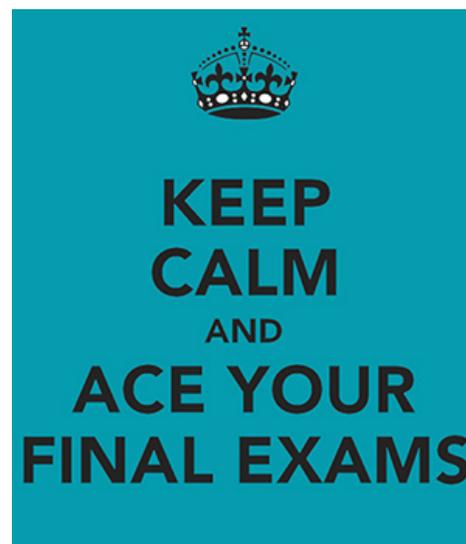
The first technique is to figure out when your peak performance period is. A peak performance period is that time of day where you get more stuff done than the rest of the day combined. Usually it is a 2 to 3 hour period of time. It is helpful to schedule your study time to coincide with your peak performance period. If you are not sure when your peak performance period is, writing down your daily activities and the time you did them on paper can give you a pretty good idea.

Another technique that works well for studying is the 50/10 or 30/10 rule. This is a ratio of study time to rest time and can be adjusted according to how ever much break time you feel you need. The basic premise of this rule is that you spend a brief focused period of time (typically 30 or 50 minutes) studying for a final or working on homework, and then take a ten minute break. By continually working for brief periods at a time you can stay 100% focused on your task and this allows you not to be burned out and increases your effectiveness at completing your task.

Some last thoughts as you are preparing for finals, if you're doing a multiple choice or true/false exam, it is best to read the question slower than you normally read to make sure you don't misread the question – this happens quite often. Also it is helpful to skip questions you don't know the answer to or are not 100% certain on. You can mark the question with a question mark and continue on, once you get to the end of the test and have answered all the questions you know, you can then go back and answer the ones you weren't sure about. This will allow you to not run out of time and answer all the questions you know.

For essay tests it is helpful to make an outline of your essay before writing it out on the test. This improves the flow of the paper and the grade you will receive. Finally, it is always good to get a full 8 hours of sleep and have something to eat for breakfast, before taking your final. This ensures you are functioning at your peak performance.

As always please come see me if you have any concerns or want to talk more about study skills. Good luck with finals!



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