Beat Final Exam Stress!

PLAN AHEAD.
Know your final exam schedule and when papers or projects are due in advance. That way, you can get a head start on studying.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS.
Turn your cell phone off and avoid using the computer if you don’t need it to study. Avoid studying in front of the television or while listening to music.
Study in locations that are beneficial to learning (i.e., not in bed).
Try studying in Ellis Library, the Medical School Library, or the Student Center.

TAKE BREAKS.
For every hour or so that you work, take a 10 or 15 minute break.
This gives your brain a little rest and will help keep you more focused when you are actually doing work.
MEET DAILY VITAMIN & MINERAL REQUIREMENTS.
Iron and B vitamins are especially important to maintaining the physical and mental energy necessary to study well. Iron-containing foods include red meat, cereals and spinach. Foods that contain B vitamins include whole-grains, wheat germ, eggs and nuts.

EAT AT REGULAR INTERVALS.
Eating regular meals helps keep nutrient and energy levels more stable, curbing the temptation of empty-calorie snacks in the vending machine. Consider 5 or 6 well-balanced, smaller meals, like toast spread with peanut butter, hummus or tuna, or a piece of cheese with fruit.
Snack smart while studying and you may find that you retain more information. Some smart snack examples are banana with peanut butter, a small baked potato with cottage cheese, or an English muffin pizza.

STAY WELL HYDRATED.
Choose your beverages wisely. Caffeine and sugar should be kept to a minimum. Since too much caffeine can make you jittery, try water, fruit juice, milk, or green tea instead.
YOU WILL FEEL BETTER if you can find ways to get stress out of your system. Try some of these ideas to see which ones work for you:

- **Exercise**
- **Write.** It can help to write about the things that are bothering you.
- **Let your feelings out.** Talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when you need to with someone you trust.
- **Do something you enjoy.** A hobby can help you relax. Volunteer work or work that helps others can be a great stress reliever.
- **Learn ways to relax your body.** This can include breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, massage, aromatherapy, yoga, or relaxing exercises.
- **Focus on the present.** Try meditation, imagery exercises, or self-hypnosis. Listen to relaxing music. Try to look for the humor in life. Laughter really can be the best medicine.
PULLING “ALL-NIGHTERS”
Do the benefits of an all-night study session outweigh the sleepiness and fuzzy thinking that generally characterize the next day? Recent research says ‘no.’

Studies find that students who regularly pulled all-nighters tended to have lower GPAs than those who didn’t.

DRINKING CAFFEINE
Caffeine can give your energy level a temporary jolt, but that can be accompanied by a later crash that leaves you feeling completely drained.

Caffeine can make it difficult to sleep when you need to. This can leave you exhausted rather than refreshed in the morning, and potentially causing a self-perpetuating cycle.

WAITING UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE... ADRENALINE!
You always run the risk of not finishing in time and being unprepared.

Adrenaline and ‘cramming’ tend to encode information into your short-term memory, but the knowledge doesn’t always remain memorized; you cheat yourself out of a true education. (And you may want to build on this knowledge later, rather than having to re-learn it at some future date).

Give yourself a deadline that’s really a week or so before your ‘real’ deadline - this gives you a burst of motivation, but also some wiggle room.
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDYING!

• Start out by studying the most important information.
• Learn the general concepts first, don’t worry about learning the details until you have learned the main ideas.
• Take notes and write down a summary of the important ideas as you read through your study material.
• If you choose to study in a group, only study with others who are serious about the test.
• Test yourself or have someone test you on the material to find out what your weak and strong areas are. You can use the review questions at the end of each chapter or practice tests that the professor may give out.
• Go to review sessions, pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test.
Eat before a test. Having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus.

Try to show up at least 5 minutes before the test will start.

Set your alarm and have a backup alarm set as well.

Read the directions slowly and carefully.

Skim through the test so that you have a good idea how to pace yourself.

Stay relaxed. If you begin to get nervous take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself and then get back to work.

If you are unsure of a question, circle it and come back to it later. It prevents you from wasting time and there may be context clues somewhere else on the test.