

Test Preparation Strategies

1. **Manage your homework time.** Read each section of your textbook before and after it is covered in class. Do your homework on time. If you do not feel secure with your understanding of the material, do more problems than required, e.g. do extra problems from your textbook or ask your instructor for extra problems. After the homework is graded, rework all problems for which you had an incorrect answer.
2. **If you do not understand a concept or a problem solution, immediately ask for help.** Do not wait! Use the resources available to you: your textbook, your instructor, tutors in the Math Center, solutions manuals, on-line tutorials, or anyone you know who can give you a good explanation. Most math concepts will be used again in subsequent material. If you miss a concept now, it could lead to further confusion and misunderstanding later on in the course.
3. **When your instructor announces a test, find out its format and content.** For example, is it multiple choice or solving equations? Will there be graphing? How much time will be allowed? Are you allowed to use tables or formulas? Should you bring a calculator or scratch paper? Ask for a practice exam and review guide.
4. **Manage your review time.** Review your notes daily for just a few minutes. Weekly, review for about an hour. Starting a week before a test, spend several hours reviewing and working problems.
5. **Make study cards.** Use index cards to write out important concepts, formulas, or anything you want to make sure you remember. Carry these cards with you and review them whenever you have a few spare moments.
6. **Review each concept to be covered in the test.** Work problems related to these concepts and for which you have the correct answers.
7. **Design your own practice exam and take it.** Choose problems for which you have the correct answers. The problems might be from previous homework, tests from past semesters, study guides, or problems from your textbook not previously worked. Rearrange the order of the problems, so that you can recognize a problem type or concept when it is randomly placed or disguised. Use the same number and type of questions for your practice exam as will appear on your test. Take the practice exam. Set a time limit equal to the time allowed for your test.
8. **Review your practice exam, homework, or previous quizzes.** Note which types of questions cause you difficulty. What errors are you making? Is there a pattern to the errors? If there is a pattern, check your test solutions carefully so that you do not make the same kind of error.
9. **Prepare yourself physically and mentally.** Get plenty of sleep before your test and eat healthy foods. Use deep-breathing to reduce stress. Immediately before the test, do physical exercise to reduce stress and increase the flow of blood to the brain. Always talk positively to yourself.