

Study Actively

Have you ever studied for many hours, only to realize that you did not take very much away from your study session? This typically happens when we use passive study strategies, like skimming over the readings, listening distractedly to lectures, or simply highlighting our notes.

As you study, try incorporating these active study strategies:

Questioning

Try to predict which questions may be asked on the exam, and practice answering them independently. This helps you remember information and allows you to rehearse the testing situation, which can reduce anxiety for the day of the exam.

Studying with others

Studying with a partner or in a group can be beneficial because other students can share resources with you, provide a fresh perspective on complex concepts and offer support and motivation when studying becomes tedious. Try quizzing each other on the material by coming up with questions that may be on the exam and compare lecture notes to identify missing/ additional information.

Creating visual aids

Create a concept map to represent information visually. A concept map is a diagram that connects different ideas or bits of information to one unifying theme or concept. To create a basic concept map, write your main concept in the middle of a page, and then draw lines branching out across the page, connecting the concept to any relating ideas.

Create your own flashcards

Flashcards can help you memorize key information. Write the question or concept on the front and the answer or explanation on the back. Flashcards are easily portable, so you can quiz yourself at any free moment. Try shuffling your flashcards to study materials out of order, and be sure to study both sides of the cards.

Use memory aids like mnemonics

Mnemonics can help you remember information for subjects that require straight memorization.

- Create an **acronym**: a word using the first letter of each concept; for example, BEDMAS represents the order of operations for math problems (Brackets, exponents, division, multiplication, addition, subtraction).
- Create an **acrostic phrase**: as with an acronym, the words begin with the first letter of each concept but form a memorable phrase; for example, “**M**y **V**ery **E**xcellent **M**other **J**ust **S**erved **U**s **N**achos” can be used to remember the order of the planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, etcetera).
- Create **analogies** to relate concepts to memorable images; for example, your brain is like a computer.

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