

TEST PREPARATION STRATEGIES



PLAN AHEAD

- Avoid cramming – this only increases stress levels and you will not be able to store the information in your long-term memory. It is also not giving you the best possible results
- Spread out your study sessions over the course of the entire semester. Expect to be able to productively study for about 20-30 minutes. You remember best what you started and ended with during a study session (much like first and last impressions). Therefore creating multiple shorter sessions is the most effective and efficient use of your time. Take frequent 5 minute breaks before you start again
- Review what you are studying after 2-3 days, then weekly until the time of the test
- Use a variety of resources to learn your materials, such as reading, images, and video. Variety helps understanding the concepts and remembering long term
- When learner outcomes or a study guide are provided, use them as a roadmap and write out the details for each of the topics/concepts listed

SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Who supports you in achieving your goals? Do you have an accountability partner? Much like staying engaged when going to the gym to attend a class, or running with a friend goes better for many than doing a work out at home on your own. Support and accountability help you stay committed, so share your goals with someone and have them ask you about your progress
- Set reminders for your tasks on your calendar/phone. It may also help to find someone else to study with to support each other, or to study in an environment where others are studying to help motivate you. Find a way that works for you!

MAXIMIZE YOUR CONCENTRATION

- Choose a place to study that offers the right light in a low traffic area where you can have the silence you need or play instrumental music to enhance your concentration (see also the Where you Study Best worksheet published by UND's Learning Services)
- Put away your phone and turn off the TV (multitasking is a myth; it just slows you down)
- Clear materials off your desk or table, most of us do best in a clean, organized environment
- Study in groups only if it is helpful to you and not a distraction

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- Do you understand the concepts you are learning about? If not, check in with a classmate, your instructor, a teaching assistant (TA), or a tutor. Commit to a review schedule and try to plan ahead by spreading study sessions out
- If you can teach your materials to others you know you are ready to take the test. Ways to check this are talking with a classmate about the content, writing everything down you know about the topic, then reviewing and filling in the gaps