

# Studying for Tests Strategically

## 1. Find Out What You Already Know

Use syllabi to **make a list of key concepts** you must know for the test.

Hide all notes and books and **test your understanding on each key concept**.

How well can you: summarize main ideas, do sample problems, recall facts from memory, apply concepts in a new way?

- **How did you do?** Rate your skill and understanding on each bit of content from your list using this simple scale:
  - 3 = I know this well
  - 2 = I know this some
  - 1 = don't know this at all

## 2. Make a Study Smart Plan

**Make a study guide**, merging main ideas from class notes and readings.

**Choose study tasks** to practice the content you rated with a 1 or 2, including:

- Make mind maps, time-lines, flash-cards.
- Study with a partner.
- Teach concepts to someone else.
- Write or speak aloud the main ideas.
- Generate higher-level thinking questions to test yourself with.

## 3. Make a Study Schedule

Once you've selected study tasks for concepts rated 1 and 2, **estimate how much time you will need** to complete them.

Look over your calendar and **identify available time-blocks** for above.

**Lay out plan on a calendar**, noting exactly what you will be doing and for how long.

Example:

- 8:00 – 8:45: *Flash-card review for chapters 1-3*

Save time in your calendar for **Self-Testing**.

## 4. Test Yourself

When you've completed your Study Plan, it's time to **test yourself again**.

Hide all materials and test your understanding on concepts you rated 1 and 2 the same way you did in Step 1.

- Can you do a problem from memory?
- Can you restate or rewrite what you learned?
- Can you teach these concepts to a friend?
- Can you answer questions you generated (not simple recall!)
- Still stuck on a particular concept? Keep practicing!



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