

++Finals Survival Guide++

Dear you,

It's that time of the term again! The time to start planning for finals so you can be your best, most effective, test-taking paper-writing project-creating rock-&-roll self.

Let this **FINALS SURVIVAL GUIDE** be your guide.

We've got three strategies and tools to help you to plan and execute radical finals prep:

#1 LOOK AHEAD TO WHAT'S COMING:

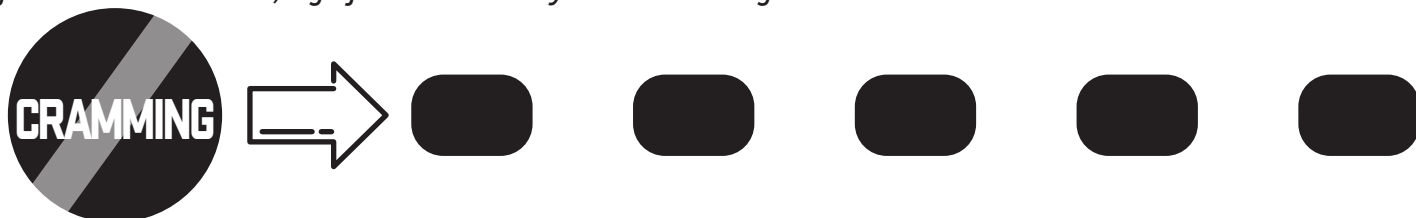
Successful finals prep calls for awareness of what's to come. Use this 4-week calendar to capture **ALL** your major deadlines and exams for **ALL** of your classes.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 8							
WEEK 9							
WEEK 10							
FINALS							

#2 DISTRIBUTE YOUR PRACTICE!

When we cram, we lose about 75% of the information within a week. **75%!!!** Instead, space your study out. Rather than spending one long, single block of time studying your Chemistry, say, break it up: take those 5 hours and make them five 1-hour sessions. You're not adding time but you are adding effectiveness.

HERE'S WHY: When you study, leave the information for about a day, then return to it, you're training your brain to remember. If it feels hard to remember, high-five! That means your brain is doing that hard work.



#3 ADOPT SELF-TESTING ACTIVITIES

So often we hear from students that to study they re-read the material or go-over their notes. But what's being re-read, and what does "go-over" even mean? Active learning is key to understanding, retaining, and retrieving the information. And testing yourself is a great way to be active!

Time and again research has shown that the act of testing yourself on the material will increase your retention of that material. Write out test questions. Take practice tests. If you forget, if it's hard, that's awesome, and means your brain's doing a lot more learning than if it were easy. It's making memory. You're giving it the opportunity to.

Best of luck, dear reader. We know you can do this, and we're here to talk with you more about it: **Waldo Hall 125. The ASC.**

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ **ROCKSTAR PLANNING:** ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

1. CHOOSE ONE COURSE:

On the front page, you identified all your deadlines and exams for all of your classes; now, we're asking that you plan for one in-depth.

Include all your major deadlines, and then consider the following:

- How much time do you have?
- How much time do you want to spend?
- What activities will you engage in?

2. GO BACK TO THE FUTURE:

Planning backwards can make the process of studying a lot of information feel more manageable, which can help you get started and avoid procrastination.

Mark when your finals are and then work backwards to list smaller goals and study milestones to be accomplished along the way.

3. WHAT, HOW, WHEN, WHERE?

When making a study plan, the more specific you make it, the more likely you are to follow through.

Create realistic study goals for yourself on

- the material (specific chapters, specific modules or videos, etc.)
- how you'll study that material (create a study guide, take a practice test, re-organize your lecture and reading notes, etc.), and
- when and where you study best.

PICK BETTER STUDY ACTIVITIES:



DRAW & RE-DRAW DIAGRAMS

- Take or re-organize notes using a mind-map to see how concepts relate
- Re-draw graphs/images/charts/diagrams FROM MEMORY

- Write out the steps you take to solve math or science problems
- Replace words with symbols or drawings



WRITE & RE-WRITE IDEAS

- Write paragraphs formulating the ideas from your notes
- Analyze diagrams, graphs and turn them into statements, descriptions

- Create a written study guide
- Make up puzzles or games to learn information



MAKE YOUR OWN PRACTICE TEST QUESTIONS

- Write example exam questions to practice - pretend you're the instructor: what should students know?
- Get together with a group to generate an exam together, then take it and talk through your results - can you justify why you're right or why another answer is wrong?
- Practice multiple choice questions, practice essay responses, practice the environment - where will you be?
- Practice changing the details of the problem and see if you can still solve it.
- Practice the kinds of questions you'll have on the exam: multiple-choice questions, essay questions, etc.

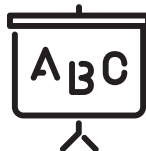


MAKE CONNECTIONS



- Generate or listen for examples of principles, real life examples

- Explore case studies as examples of concepts
- Connect your lecture notes with the notes you took from the book
- Arrange information into lists, words into hierarchies



PROVIDE EXPLANATION/SUMMARY

- Teach the material to someone else as if you're lecturing
- Explain aloud the answers to flash cards, reading questions, or test questions

- Describe the information to someone who wasn't there
- Discuss topics with others to validate understanding (peers, professors, others)
- Explain ideas to someone else using real life examples

EXAM PREPARATION PLAN

Take a look at an example plan here: success.oregonstate.edu/finals-survival.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 9							
WEEK 10							
FINALS WEEK							

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES:

BEFORE

STRETCH
or go for a walk
ahead of time
to relax.

ARRIVE
early with all
you need!

FIND
a seat and take
deep breaths.

TAKE
a moment
to focus.

DURING

READ
through the
whole exam.

PACE
yourself.

TAKE
2 minutes to
jot down what
you don't want
to forget.

READ
each
question
closely.

CIRCLE
key-words.

ANSWER
all parts of
each
question.

IF STUCK

MARK
to return to,
then move on.

THINK
back to your
studying.

LOOK
for clues in
other
questions.

THINK
like your
instructor - what
do they want
to see?

DON'T
psych yourself
out. Keep
moving
forward.

OVERALL

DEVELOP
a system to
review, being
sure you've
answered all
Q's.

LEAVE TIME
to double-check
answers,
especially
computational.

BELIEVE
in your ability
to succeed - you
can do this.



IF YOU FIND THAT YOU'RE STRESSED...

No, don't make like a bird and fly away, but do try these stress-relieving techniques.

BEFORE THE TEST

1. **Practice is your friend.** Schedule as much practice of the material as you can into your studying: take tests that mimic/simulate your upcoming exam, recite info aloud, teach ideas to others, etc. The goal is to learn to the point that there's no way you can get it wrong.
2. **Be sure to take breaks.** It's important - for your well-being and your memory - that you give yourself time to recharge. Move around, look up, talk to someone about something else, and return to your study fresh.
3. **Get enough sleep and eat well.** Sleep is integral to the memory-making process, and your brain needs fuel in order to learn. Success is holistic, and your test performance will be influenced not only by your study, but by how well you take care of yourself, too.

DURING THE TEST

1. **Stop negative-talk in its tracks.** Testing can be stressful, and stress can lead to judgement, which can lead to more stress. If you catch yourself in the judgement act, try to reframe your thinking: every test and exam provides information and opportunity to grow, and this learning can be used in future prep and test-taking.
2. **Pause and take a series of deep breaths.** You might even try closing your eyes. Try to just think about your breath and nothing else, or think about exhaling your nervous energy and inhaling calm. You can do this.
3. **Try tensing and releasing your muscles.** Again, take just a few moments to do this, but really focus on your muscles, and nothing else. For example, one at a time, tighten each muscle in your arm and then work backwards to relax each one, too. Then, return to the test!

SOURCES



Check out the sources we used to develop this packet, and take a look at one of these 3-weeks-to-finals calendars filled out to get a feel for how you might complete yours: success.oregonstate.edu/finals-survival.

Want to talk more about your exam prep and how it can work even better? Swing by **Waldo 125** and talk with one of our **ASC Strategists!** Or make an **Academic Coaching** appointment for yourself to think aloud with the coach and return to your learning with fresh ideas.



The Academic Success Center • Waldo 125 • 541-737-2272 • success.oregonstate.edu • bit.ly/getcoachedOSU.com