



'Tis the season – Exam Season! First semester exams begin December 12th for electives, followed by core subject exams on December 18th. What are exams for, anyway? Exams assess what you have learned. However, pending exams can and often do induce feelings of stress and anxiety. The key to successfully surviving exams is in the preparation, just like the key to making a delicious dessert is the recipe!

Successful Exam Preparation Includes:

1. **Organization** – It is not too late to start organizing your assignments, notes, and quizzes/tests taken during this semester. Create an exam calendar and schedule times to study when you can concentrate and focus on one subject at a time. Dedicate a place to study that mimics the environment in which you will take your exams: quiet with no distractions. For example, a desk stocked with all the materials you will need like paper, index cards, highlighters and pens/pencils is a great place to study.
2. **Sleep** - Avoid studying for exams on your bed as this is a place for rest and relaxation. You may have to schedule time to sleep. Aim for 8 hours a night in the days leading up to and during exams. You need just as much sleep while you are studying for exams as you do the night before the exams.
3. **Diet**- Start now eating well-balanced nutritious meals and snacks. The old adage is true! You are what you eat - or don't eat. If you are hungry when you are studying for or taking exams, you will find it harder to concentrate and focus. You will be more distracted by your stomach and less able learn. Students who eat a healthy breakfast are able to focus and accurately retrieve information. They also perform better on reading, math, and problem-solving assessments.
4. **Exercise**- Between scheduled study blocks of focused concentration, take a walk, jog, run, play outside with your pet, or do something fun to raise your heartbeat. Exercise relieves stress, clears the mind, and energizes the brain.
5. **Study Groups**- Organize a time to meet with your classmates during or after school to talk about what you think will be covered on the exams and compare notes. Teach each other. If you can teach someone else the material then you will master it yourself. Share tips for remembering information and quiz each other.
6. **Note-Taking Tips** – Don't try to write everything down. Instead, write down only keywords and use abbreviations. Make time to review your notes daily and rewrite or reorganize them, if necessary. Use your textbook to fill in any missing information and ask your teacher for help. Learn how to pick up on what your teacher emphasizes as important information to know.
7. **Ask** – If you are struggling with a concept, make a list questions. Ask your teacher during class to clarify or review what you are struggling with understanding. Make an outline of things you plan to study and show the teacher to be sure you haven't missed anything. Be your own best advocate!
8. **Relax**- Save some personal time to have fun with your friends and family. Maintaining a balance of physical, mental, and emotional health is important in setting yourself up for success. Know thyself,

what helps you to calm your mind and body. It could be deep breathing or mentally picturing a relaxing place like the beach or the mountains. Practice these calming techniques to use during exams.

Remember, you *will* survive exams. “Let go” after taking each exam and move on. You are more than a number on your exam, project, or GPA. You are a unique individual with your own special gifts and talents given to you by God!

Final Thoughts....

- ✓ Do not procrastinate.
- ✓ Manage your time wisely and start preparing now.
- ✓ Be disciplined and stick to your study plan.
- ✓ Need help getting started? Ask your counselor, parents, or anyone who you know is good at preparing and studying for exams.
- ✓ Plan a celebration for all your hard work and dedication. Enjoy your 16 days of Christmas and New Year’s break. 😊

I hate to cut the highlighted, but if you do keep the last two checks about getting help from a counselor and planning a celebration, like so

Mary Pat Martin, LCSW, MAT
Professional School Counselor

Alternate Option:

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