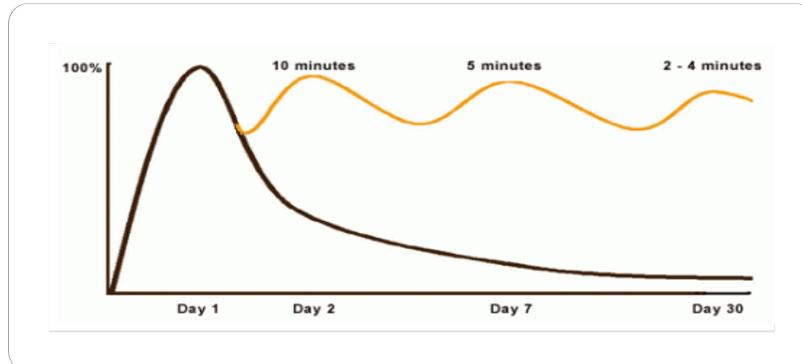




Test Taking: A Guide to Preparing for Exams

Preparing for a test requires much more than one or two days of reviewing your notes. Ideally, test preparation should happen throughout the semester and on a very regular basis. Why? Look at The Forgetting Curve. After 24 hours, more than half of the information learned on day 1 is lost, and approximately 5% of the information can be recalled by day 30. Yikes!



The good news. You can drastically change the shape of the curve. By spending 10 minutes reviewing (within 24 hours after class), you can bring the percent of information retained back to nearly 100%. With regular reviews, you won't need to cram to prepare for the exam, because you have given your brain the time to learn the material.

Study Strategies

Need some ideas on how to prepare for exams? Check which strategies you are already doing. What could you consider doing more of?

- Know when all exams are and create a study schedule
- Complete all assigned readings
- Take notes from readings
- Regularly review notes from readings
- Attend lecture
- Take lecture notes
- Regularly review lecture notes
- Attend tutoring and/or SI
- Create study guides, summary sheets, flashcards, concept maps, charts, or diagrams to organize information and show relationships between ideas
- Get together with a study group
- Visit with the professor during office hours
- Study from a study guide (your own or your professor's)
- Review old homework and past quizzes
- Complete practice problems
- Predict test questions
- Check understanding by creating questions, closing notes, and answering the questions in your own words
- Review until the material is understood well enough that you could explain it to someone else
- Get plenty of sleep and eat a good meal before the exam