

SIX PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TEST PREPARATION

1. Concentrate on understanding the meaning of the information. Go for understanding the big picture - how it all fits together. Meaning acts like glue and there will be much less memorizing to do.
2. Would you stay up all night, live on potato chips, and fray your nerves with endless caffeine to prepare for a big athletic competition? Your brain is just as much a part of your physical body as the rest of you: it needs good rest, good food, fresh air, exercise, and relaxation to function. Exams are your Boston (or NY) marathon. Act accordingly!
3. Cramming is futile! Would you keep pouring water on a plant that was already drowning in water? Information learned well is information learned in carefully spaced-out doses.
4. There is no substitute for sleep. Stimulants give you the illusion of greater mental acuity when in fact, beyond a fairly early point, they actually decrease acuity (unless it is medicine that is prescribed for you). Just because you are awake does not mean that you are learning, or even alert!
5. Never, ever, share your own or use others' prescribed stimulant medications! The sharing or unlawful possession of controlled substances is extremely dangerous as well as a felony. It is not worth the risk (especially in light of #4)!
6. Incorporate humor into your studying and into mnemonic phrases wherever possible. Tension and genuine laughter cannot coexist. Humor helps the brain stay calm, alert and learn well.