



A Five-Day Study Plan

Undergraduate Tutoring Center | University of Vermont

Directions: Start this plan at least five days before your exam. Studying over multiple days helps improve learning and retention while reducing stress.

- **Get to know your exam:** Is it cumulative? What course content can you expect? What textbook chapters, lectures, and practice problems will it cover? What is the test format? Does the instructor provide a study guide? Check the syllabus and ask your instructor or TA if needed.
- **Gather your materials:** Collect notes from readings and class sessions, relevant textbook chapters, practice problems, and study guides. If the exam is cumulative, include materials from earlier units.

DAY 1:

- **Create a big-picture outline:** Create a list of all topics you need to study. Before looking at your course materials, write down as much as you can remember about each topic. Then use your notes and readings to fill in any gaps.
- **Assess your understanding:** Review your list and identify which topics are most challenging. Highlight or mark areas that need additional review and study time.
- **Make a schedule:** Divide the remaining topics across Days 2-4, and assign specific goals for each study session. Reserve Day 5 for a final review.

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- **Review your plan:** Check your goals for the day and identify the material(s) you will focus on. Compare notes, PowerPoints, readings, and practice problems to create a detailed study guide for the day.
 - **Prioritize difficult topics:** Start with material you find the most challenging, then move to topics you feel more confident about.

DAY 2:

- **Study actively:** Use active study strategies that align with your exam format, such as completing practice problems for a math course or drafting written essays for a history course. Practice retrieving information from memory, identifying examples of abstract concepts, and connecting course concepts with visuals like charts or concept maps. Avoid simply rereading your notes or the course slides.
 - **Assess:** During the last 15 minutes of your study session, reflect on how things went. Think about which topics feel stronger, and which need more attention. Consider if you need to dedicate any time tomorrow to topics you reviewed today, and adjust your study plan as needed.
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- **Continue your study plan:** Repeat the process outlined for Day 2.
 - **Take breaks:** Studying in shorter sessions is generally more effective than marathon study sessions. Try 30 minutes of focused work, followed by a 5-minute break, and adjust as needed.
- DAY 3:**
- **Re-evaluate:** Briefly review topics from previous study sessions. Consider whether additional support would be helpful, and if needed try to connect with a classmate, a tutor, your TA, or your instructor.
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- **Continue your study plan:** Repeat the process outlined for Days 2 and 3.
 - **Practice self-care:** Prioritize sleep (aim for at least 8 hours), nutritious meals, physical activity, stress management, and time with friends or community. Maintaining balance can support learning and exam performance.
- DAY 4:**
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- **Organize, Review, and Rest!** Gather the study guides and materials you created throughout the week. Complete a final review, focusing on the most challenging concepts.
 - **Continue practicing self-care:** Keep up the self-care, and give yourself credit for your hard work (& preparing early)!
- DAY 5:**