



# How to Get Through Exams



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## Student Wellness Centre

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# **Sleep Your Way Through Exams**

**Getting adequate sleep will increase your ability to study effectively and write exams.**

## **Getting Enough ZZZs**

- It's a fact: 8 hours of sleep a night improves your academic performance.
- Thinking of pulling an all-nighter? Think again! Students who pull “all-nighters” are more likely to have a lower grade average.
- A good night sleep before an exam will help you concentrate and recall information more accurately.

## **Power Naps**

- A power nap can help reduce fatigue and make you feel rejuvenated. Nap before 3pm so that it doesn't affect falling asleep at night.
- Keep your naps to 15-30 minutes or less to prevent waking up feeling groggy and tired.
- If you don't feel comfortable having a nap, try meditation; it gives your body a rest and produces slower brain waves similar to sleep.

## **Can't Sleep**

- Avoid chocolate and caffeine at least 3-4 hours before you go to bed.
- Get some sunlight and fresh air every day.
- Try a glass of warm milk before bed; it induces a restful sleep and you will wake up feeling refreshed.
- Alcohol may induce sleep but leads to a restless night and you won't wake up refreshed.
- Take 30-60 minutes before bed to wind down and put your brain into rest mode.
- Put down your electronics 45 minutes prior to bed.
- Keep your bed for sleep and romantic purposes only. Studying in bed can reduce your ability to have a restful sleep.
- Keep your electronics out of reach from your bed; even better is to keep them out of your room.
- If you really can't sleep. Get out of bed and study for a bit. Go back to bed when you are sleepy.

# Eat Your Way Through Exams

**A healthy diet during exams gives you the energy you need to study and keep your immune system healthy.**

## **Quick Tips**

- Use “[Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#)” found at Health Canada’s website.
- Plan and prepare your meals for a week; it saves time and money.
- Breakfast is the best study buddy. Eat from at least 3 food groups for breakfast (e.g., whole-wheat toast with peanut butter, banana, and glass of milk).
- Keep meals simple (e.g., scrambled eggs with toast, cheese and salsa, or a chef's salad).
- Limit high sugar foods. A short term boost will be followed by a long-term slump.

## **Feed Your Brain**

- Have a snack or meal every 3-4 hours.
- Go with whole grain foods for sustained energy and better memory (e.g., whole wheat bread, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and oatmeal).

- Protein improves mental performance. You need 2-3 servings a day. Easy choices include nuts, beans, cheese, canned fish, and eggs.
- Omega-3 fats improve memory so go for tuna, salmon, nuts, and seeds.

### **Eat Your Veggies and Fruit**

- The darker the colour, the higher the concentration of nutrients. Great choices include spinach, bell peppers, carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, blueberries, oranges and grapefruits.
- Buy and prepare veggies and fruit ahead of time so they are ready to eat.

### **Thirst for Knowledge**

- Stay hydrated! Water is essential for concentration and mental alertness. Refill your water bottle a couple of times a day. Limit high sugar drinks.
- Caffeine hinders the ability to remember information even though you feel more alert.

# **Relax Your Way Through Exams**

**Learning to relax during exam time will increase your ability to focus and get more out of studying.**

## **Take a Break**

- Take short breaks between study sessions (e.g., a 10-minute break after an hour of study)
- Take a longer break every 2 to 3 hours while studying and do something you enjoy.
- Socialize with friends and family.
- Play with your pet(s).
- Read something light.
- Listen to music or watch a bit of TV or Netflix.
- Have a hot bath or shower to relax your muscles.
- Go for a walk.
- Make an appointment for a massage at Student Wellness Centre.

## **Monitor Your Thinking**

- Be aware of the messages you are telling yourself. Expecting the worst causes more anxiety.
- Remind yourself that “you can do it.”
- Visualize how you would like things to go.

- Focus and concentrate on a positive thought or object which helps to clear your mind of stress and worries.
- Imagine yourself succeeding rather than failing.

### **Learn to Relax**

- Drinking non-caffeinated tea relaxes the brain and induces mental alertness.
- Practicing yoga and meditation during exams can help relax the mind and body, relieve stress, and sharpen your attention. Try yoga at the PAC and Google “meditation” for relaxing ideas.
- Laughter is the best medicine and a great stress reliever. Watch a comedy show or play a board game. Schedule some fun into each day.
- Use aromatherapy or light a scented candle. Try lavender or vanilla as they are relaxing scents.

# Exercise Your Way Through Exams

**Exercising regularly during exams is a great stress reliever.**

## **Tips**

- Although it can be tempting, don't stop your regular exercise routine during exam time. Try to keep up with the Canadian minimum recommendations: 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week.
- Give your brain a rest and go outside for a walk on your study breaks.
- Get off the bus three stops ahead of your stop and walk the rest of the way.
- Take the stairs.
- Stand when you meet with friends instead of sitting.

## **Use the PAC**

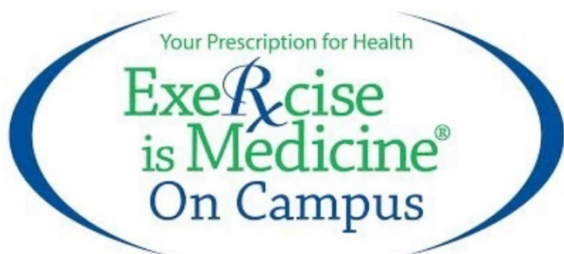
- The PAC is open Monday-Friday from 6:30 am to 10:30 pm and weekends from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm.
- Lane swimming to get some exercise and a full body stretch.
- Use the equipment and try an exercise class, it's free.

## **Exercise**

- Improves concentration.



- Improves your memory.
- Reduces stress and anxiety.
- Helps you sleep better.
- Helps you live longer.



## Breathe Your Way Through Exams

### Try a Breathing Box

Slowing down your breathing will help your mind to relax and reduce your anxiety. Choose any square object (e.g., a window) and use it as your breathing box. Starting in the bottom left, inhale through your nose as your eyes move up the box. Hold your breath as your eyes move along the box and then exhale as you move your eyes down the box.

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# Additional Resources

[wellness.usask.ca](https://wellness.usask.ca)

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