

How to revise and prepare for assessment.

There are some important aspects specific to revision including:

Be Honest With Yourself

It's important to be honest with yourself about how you are using your time.

Sitting at your desk staring out of the window does **not** count as revision, even if your course materials, handouts and notes are open in front of you. Technically, neither does drawing up a beautiful colour-coded revision plan, even though it may help your revision planning.

Be honest about what you are doing. If it is useful and vital preparation, then go ahead. If you are doing it in order to postpone the evil moment that you will actually have to do some revision, then stop it and get on with your revision. Now.

You will feel better once you have started to revise. Really. Just getting half an hour of actual work done will feel so much better than the 'black cloud' worry of 'I still haven't started my revision and the exams are only x days away'. Go on. Just do it.



Where to Revise?

It's important to revise in a location where you know you will be able to study effectively. You might have a good study area at home, away from noise and distractions. However, studying at home doesn't suit everyone. Remember - you can use the College on your non-timetabled day and lots of people use their local library as their preferred location for studying.



Listen To, But Don't Indulge, Yourself

Some days you can work for two hours solid, without a break. Other days you will be struggling to manage 20 minutes without being distracted.

Sometimes this is about the subject that you're doing. Sometimes it's just about your biorhythms, and/or how much sleep you had the night before. And sometimes, if you're honest, it's about just not wanting to work.

Find the balance between beating yourself up and being self-indulgent. If 20 minutes is a struggle, reward yourself for half an hour's work with a 5-minute break, but no more. If you're good to work for an hour, reward yourself with 10 minutes' break after that. If you manage longer, the breaks can be longer too.

However long you normally study for at a time, remember that you're going to have to sit still and silent for the length of the exam. If your exam lasts two hours, make sure you've spent at least a few revision sessions sitting still and working for that long, so that you know that you can do it.

Take a Break

If today just isn't your day for revising, and you really can't settle to anything, then take a break. But don't just sit around looking at Facebook, or distracting your friends from their revision by messaging them.

Set yourself a time limit, maybe an hour, maybe two, and do something constructive. Take the dog for a walk in the park, or go for a swim at the local pool. Fresh air is very good for concentration, and exercise will help your brain relax. Or do some cooking: maybe make dinner, or bake a cake.

When you've finished, go back to work and try again. You'll probably find the break and distraction have done you good and you can think more clearly.



The Importance of Exercise

You can be revising all day, and feel exhausted, but still be unable to sleep if you haven't taken very much physical exercise all day.

Try to balance mental and physical activity, even if your physical activity is only a walk around the block at the end of the day. If you can take some real exercise periodically, a run, a swim, a bike ride, or a decent walk, then do. You will feel better, and work better, for it.

Switching Off...

You need a chance to switch off before you try to sleep at the end of the day. Don't stop revision and go straight to bed, but give yourself at least an hour in between.

Research suggests that it may be even worse to stop revision and turn straight to the internet or TV, because there is evidence that the light of the screen switches off the neurotransmitter that helps us to sleep. Instead, find something non-screen-based that helps you to relax and do that for a while. You will sleep better, and wake better able to face another day's revision.

10 quick Tips for Successful Exam Preparation

- Give yourself enough time to prepare for the assessment
- Use flow charts, diagrams and mind maps
- Ask your Lecturer about anything you are unsure of
- Explain your answers to others
- Organize study groups with friends
- Take regular breaks
- Plan the day of your exams
- Stay calm and think positively
- Drink plenty of water
- Get a good sleep the night before the exam