

Preparing for Tests: Adapted from “Prealgebra – An Integrated Approach” by Lial and Hestwood

To improve your Test Score:	Why:
1. Get 7 – 8 hours of sleep the night before the exam	Fatigue and exhaustion reduce efficiency. They also cause poor memory recall. If you didn't get enough sleep, 20 minutes of relaxation can help
2. To help you sleep the night before, or anytime you need to calm down, eat high carbohydrate foods: popcorn, breads, rice, pasta, baked potatoes.	Carbohydrates increase the level of serotonin in the brain, which has a calming effect on the mind. It reduces feeling of stress and tension and increases your ability to concentrate.
3. Moderate exercise 15 – 20 minutes shortly before the test.	Exercise reduces stress and will help prevent a panic attack or “blinking out” on a test. Exercise also increases your alertness, clear thinking, and energy level.
4. Practice slow, deep breathing for 5 minutes each day. Then do a minute or two of deep breathing right before the test. Also, stop during the test if you feel your anxiety building and do a minute of deep breathing. You can also grab hold of the seat of your chair; pull down while pushing feet into the floor for a few seconds. Deep breathe, roll your shoulders, and then relax.	When test anxiety hits, you breathe more quickly and shallowly, which causes hyperventilation. Symptoms may be confusion, inability to concentrate, shaking, dizziness and more. Slow, deep breathing will calm you and prevent panic.
5. Eat a small, high-energy meal about two hours before. Protein! Not high-fat foods.	Just 3-4 ounces of protein increases the amount of tyrosine in the brain. This chemical improves your alertness, accuracy, and motivation. High fat foods dull your mind and slow down your brain.
6. Before the test go easy on caffeinated beverages, candy bars or other sugar food.	Extra caffeine can make you jittery, and shaky for the test. Too much sugar can cause negative emotional reactions in some people.
7. Drink plenty of water.	Research suggests that staying well hydrated improves the electro-chemical communications in your brain.
8. Give your brain the time it needs to learn the material.	Cramming doesn't work; By studying every day, helps the brain remember what it has learned.
9. When taking a test, chew the same kind of gum, or eat the same candy that you do when you study for the test.	Sense of smell is one of the best memory enhancers. It will help you remember what you were working on when you were studying. The exercise in chewing gum will help relieve some of the stress of the test.
10. Be positive! Tell yourself you can do it. Imagine yourself as succeeding.	When you imagine yourself failing, you usually do. When you have put the effort in to succeed, imagine yourself acing the test. You usually do!