

Test-Taking Tips

1. **Don't cram.** If you have been studying regularly, you already know what you need to know.
2. **On exam day, have breakfast.** Your brain needs calories! Make sure you eat well before the test time.
3. **Look over the exam.** Check briefly for the types of questions and number of questions. Make sure you know where to mark your answers. Read the directions carefully and let the test administrator know if you need them to reread any instructions. Easier questions may give you hints for the questions you are unsure about.
4. **Don't panic.** It is extremely common to get the exam, look at the questions, and feel that you can't work a single problem. Take a deep breath, let it out slowly. Do this a couple of times. Look over the exam to find a question that you can answer. Don't bother about the other students in the room – they've got their own problems. Before long your brain will begin to unclench a bit, and some things will occur to you. You're on your way.
5. **Pace yourself.** If you are taking a timed test (PLAN, ACT, SAT, PSAT), make sure you know how many questions are in each section and how much time you have to complete the section. If the test is untimed (GEE), don't rush! Pay attention to announcements that time is almost up for each section.
6. **Have some perspective.** Fear of the exam will make it seem like a much bigger deal than it really is, so remind yourself what it does *not* represent. It is not a test of your overall intelligence, of your worth as a person, or of your prospects for success in life. Your future happiness will not be determined by it. It is only an academic test – it tests nothing about you except whether you understand certain concepts and possess the skills to implement them. You can't demonstrate your understanding and skills to their best advantage if you panic through making more of it than it is.
7. **Be positive.** If you believe you will fail, you don't give yourself a chance to pass. Believe you will pass. Be confident in your knowledge and skills.
8. **Answer every question.** For the iLEAP, GEE, ACT, and PLAN, there is no penalty for incorrect answers. Make sure to give yourself enough time to answer every question, even if it is a blind guess.
9. **Use POE (Process of Elimination).** Especially on problems that are more difficult for you, eliminate answers that you know are incorrect by crossing them out on the exam.
10. **Recheck your work.** If you have time left, go back and review your work. Make sure you have darkened the appropriate circle for each question. Review difficult problems.