



Do you get overwhelmed thinking about finals week?

Creating a realistic study schedule and following it will make the final two weeks of your semester less stressful and more manageable. By splitting exam material into smaller chunks and by breaking larger projects (e.g. final papers) down into bite-size pieces, it will be easier to keep track of what is ahead of you and what you have accomplished. Including ALL finals (exams, papers and projects) in one plan will clarify how much work you are facing, how early you should start and where you have to set priorities.

1. Materials and tools you need to get started?

When sitting down to create a plan for finals preparation, have in front of you:

- A calendar ([printed out](#) or electronically)
- Different colored markers (if using a paper calendar)
- Each class syllabus
- All course material

2. What do you include in your Game Plan besides study and writing sessions?

Before you can dedicate certain times in your schedule to study or writing sessions you need to prepare your calendar by adding:

- Exam times
- Due dates for papers, projects or take-home exams
- All class times (before reading period)
- Any meetings (with professors, TAs, counseling, coaching, etc.)
- Review sessions (you might get information on exam format and key concepts to focus on)
- [Study group](#) sessions (quizzing and teaching each other are some of the most effective study strategies)

Once you have this scaffolding built, you can start adding your **study and writing sessions** (25-90 minutes per session). Work backwards starting at your final due date.

Study sessions for an exam. Go through the course material that is relevant for the exam and define small chunks of material that you can study in one session. For example, you can split by topics, book chapters, lectures, problem sets, vocabulary sets, etc.

Writing/work sessions for a paper or project. Set multiple milestones (e.g. research, outline, first draft, revision and final paper) or break your writing down into different chapters, sections or sub-sections.

To finalize your Finals Game Plan add:

- Wake-up and bed times
- Meal times (try to eat healthy and include [brain foods](#) in your diet)
- Breaks (avoid burn-out by applying the [pomodoro technique](#))
- Time to exercise (increase your energy level, brain function and mental state)
- Self-rewards (after accomplishing a study session allow yourself a piece of chocolate, sip of coffee, fresh air, etc.)

3. What do you consider when scheduling work sessions?

- Keep your energy level in mind (are you a morning bird or night owl?)
- Study in the right order by setting priorities
 - Consider your current class standing. Is there a class you should be putting more effort in?
 - Is there a final that will be more difficult than others? Give yourself more time to study for your toughest classes. This will also give you more time to ask your professor questions.
 - Study material in this order:
 1. *definitely* on the final
 2. *probably* on the final
 3. *might be* on the final
- You can choose if you want to combine study sessions and writing sessions in one day or dedicate one day to studying and another day to writing.
- To prevent burnout and encourage recall and memory, consider switching up your subjects. For example, physics in the morning, computer science in the afternoon, and English in the evening.
- Make sure to schedule personal recap sessions to repeat the material you have already studied.

4. Last but not least!

Start early. If you start ahead of due dates, you can do your best work and get the most out of your classes. Be realistic about how long certain tasks will take. Starting early will allow you to plan in buffer times and much needed breaks.

Ask for help. Your professors and TA's are there to help! Ask them questions regarding the material as soon as you get stuck. It can be a time saver to receive a quick answer instead of struggling for hours.

Stay well-rested. Make sure you are well-rested so that you can be fully focused during your exams. Getting enough sleep (about 8 hours per night) the weeks leading up to your finals is also important as you will be able to concentrate better and retain information longer.