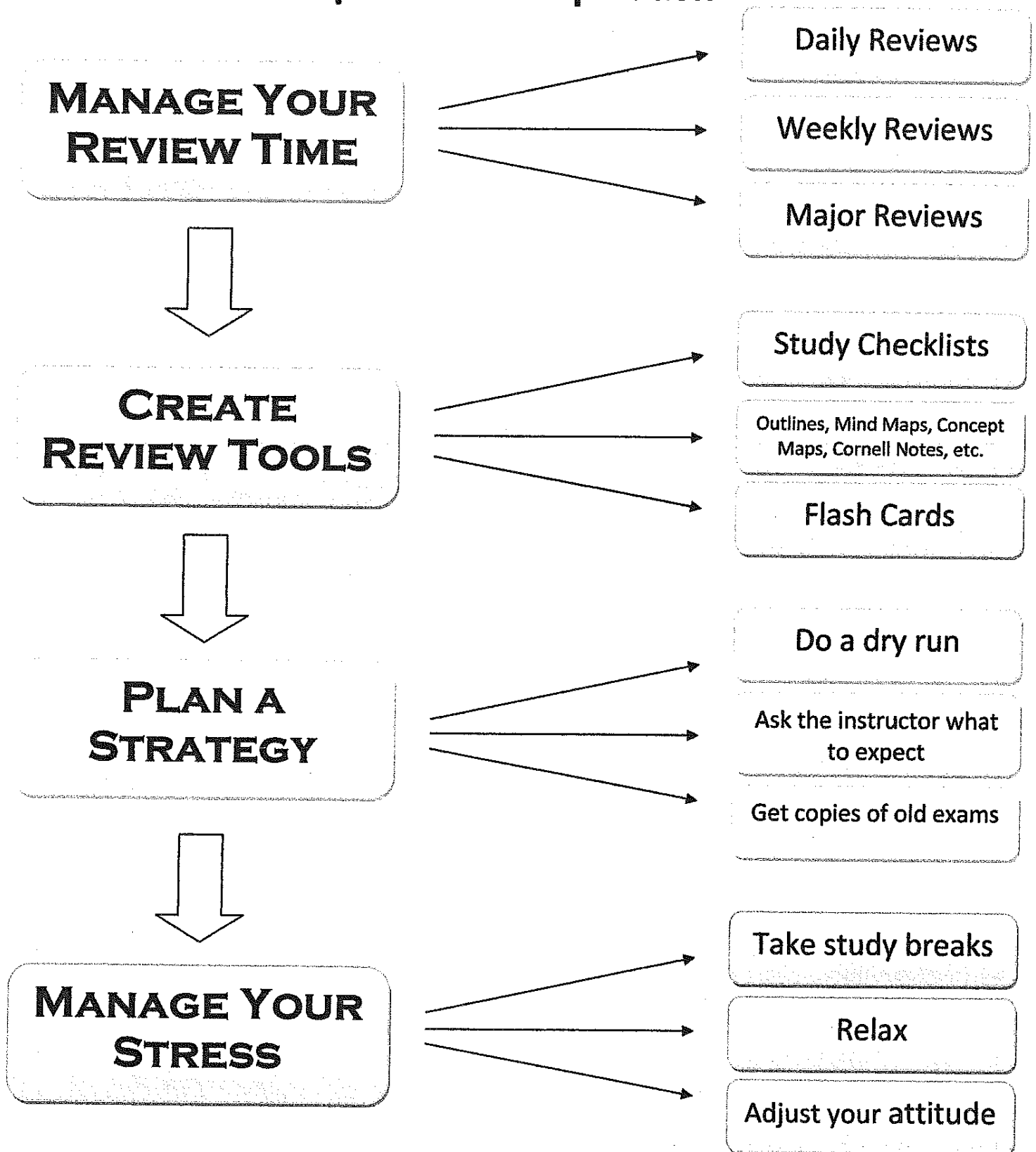


WHAT TO DO: BEFORE THE TEST

Tips for Test Preparation



Daily Reviews

Review lecture notes before and after class

Study Checklists

Make a list of items to review and check them off once you've mastered them

Do a dry run

Practice filling in a diagram, writing an essay, solving equations, etc.

Take study breaks

Taking short, frequent breaks will keep you focused and attentive

Weekly Reviews

Spend 1 hour studying per subject

Outlines, Mind Maps, Concept Maps, Cornell Notes, etc.

Organize notes and information. These are several useful techniques

Ask the instructor what to expect

Don't be afraid to ask what type of questions you'll have to answer then adapt your study methods

Relax

Don't let stress overwhelm you. Visit <http://www.montana.edu/wwwcc/docs/selfhelp.html> and see what works

Major Reviews

Longer and occur a week or two before major exams. Sessions should span 2-5 hours with breaks

Flash Cards

Start making these early and carry them with you to review on the go

Get copies of old exams

Not all professors will provide these but it doesn't hurt to ask

Adjust your attitude

Believe that you deserve what you want and are capable of attaining it

What to Do: Before the Test

Tips for Test Preparation

- Manage Your Review Time.
 - Daily Reviews
 - Include short reviews of lecture notes before and after class. This type of behavior will help convert information from your long term to your short term memory. Concentrate on what you have just learned as well as material that involves simple memorization.
 - Weekly Reviews
 - Spent about one hour studying per subject. This is the perfect time to begin making review tools and revisiting reading assignments. Try making and answering practice questions during this time also. Don't wait until the week of a major test to begin this kind of structured studying.
 - Major Reviews
 - These review sessions are longer and should happen within the week or two before finals and other major exams. Major reviews should span two to five hours with sufficient and relatively frequent breaks to stay attentive. Utilize your review tools, and work on recalling information. Also try to draw on the relationships between concepts and deepen your understanding of the material for a given class. If you have been reviewing all semester, you should know most of the basics, so work on taking things further and thinking critically about the course material.
- Create Review Tools
 - Study checklists
 - Determine all of the subjects that you need to review and list them (as well as their parts). Include assignments, important lectures, diagrams, and formulas. Check an item off of the list when you understand it, can recall it, and have answered any remaining questions you have about it. Do not ignore items once you have checked them off, but don't revisit them until most of the items on your list have been checked off.
 - Outlines, Mind Maps, Concept Maps, Cornell Notes, etc.
 - All of the above tools are variations of the same kind of tool. They are comprehensive and structured to work with varying personality and learning styles. These tools will help you manage all of the information you are responsible for in a way that capitalizes on the way you learn. Use these tools as visual cues and incorporate connections between ideas and critical thinking.
 - Flash cards
 - Use these like portable test questions. Begin making them early in the semester and continue to do so throughout. Incorporate these into your daily and weekly reviews; they are great for material that needs to be memorized, like vocabulary, formulas, and dates.
- Plan a Strategy.
 - Do a dry run
 - One of the best ways to prepare for a test is to practice the tasks you'll actually have to do. If you need to label a diagram of the brain or write an essay comparing two characters then study by doing those things. For multiple choice and true/false based tests, create practice questions and compile them into the same format of the test you'll be taking. Then take your mock exam with your books closed, over a fixed time period. Take time to think about (and ask your professors) what type of questions you'll have to answer. You'll want to adapt your study methods differently for a test that will call mostly for memorization that one that will require application and analysis.
 - Ask the instructor what to expect.
 - Most instructors will answer questions about the kind of test you'll be taking; some even give detailed study guides. Focus your anxiety about the test into questions about the test that will help you determine how you should study. Ask the instructor about which course material the test will cover—readings, lectures, lab sessions, or a combination? Will the test be cumulative, or will it focus on the most recent information? Will you be solving problems, applying concepts, recalling major themes, or be tests on facts? Also ask what types of questions the test will have—true/false, multiple choice, short answer, or essay.
 - Get copies of old exams
 - Copies of previous exams for the class might be available from the instructor, the department, or the library. Old tests can help you plan what to review. Be cautious not to rely too heavily on these tests since the instructor may have changed the material taught since the last test. Also, check that your school's policies allow making past tests available to students.