1. Rule #1—DO NOT CRAM! - do not wait until the night before your exam to start studying. Begin preparing now! DEVELOP A STUDY PLAN. In fact, use something like the five-day study plan to help structure your exam preparation. When you have a plan you can make the most of your study time and you do not feel as if you are just spinning your wheels.

2. Attend review sessions or study groups. If your course has Supplemental Instruction, do not skip the weekly sessions! If there is a study group for your class, make time to attend those sessions as well. Don’t have a study group? Then form one on your own, by asking your classmates if they would be interested in getting together to study for the upcoming exam.

3. Pick the perfect place to study. Choosing a nice quiet space where you can focus is important. Studying in your bed or in the cafeteria will not help you ace those midterm exams because they have too many distractions. Find a space in the lower level of the library or somewhere else on campus to study in quiet.

4. Unplug and disconnect. This is one of the hardest things to do; however, checking Twitter or Snapchat every five minutes will not help you accomplish your studying. So turn off your cell phone and log off your social media to achieve more success in your learning.

5. Figure out what will be on the exam. No, this does not require mind reading! It does require you to go to class regularly, pay attention, and stay caught up with your homework. Your class attendance may seem disconnected from your midterm exam; nevertheless, by going to class and paying attention you are learning and engaging with the material over the course of the semester. This is a much better way to learn than trying to cram the night before an exam.

6. Meet with your professor. Stop by during office hours to discuss difficult concepts, to ask questions about lecture material, or just to find out what types of topics the midterm will cover. You may be surprised at how much your professor is willing to share if you just ask and show initiative by visiting her or him during office hours.

7. Prepare any materials you’ll need in advance. If, for example, your professor says it’s okay to bring a page of notes to the test, make that page well in advance. That way you’ll be able to refer to what you need quickly. The last thing you want to do during a timed exam is waste time looking for the “answers” in your notes. Additionally, any material you prepare becomes the perfect study guide or study aid.

8. Take breaks. A 12-hour marathon study session will not do anything except make you crazy. Instead, take short breaks of 10-15 minutes for every hour of studying. Leave your study area when you do this so that you can get a bit of fresh air to clear your head.

9. Cut the junk. Skipping meals or eating junk food while you study will not help you ace that midterm. Plan your study time to include regular meals and pack yourself some healthy snacks (fruit, nuts, dark chocolate, and coffee— but not too much caffeine - are some super foods to keep your brain in tip-top shape).

10. Sleep! Giving your mind and body time to rest and relax before a big exam is important. If you walk into your midterm exhausted, you will not be able to think clearly. Six to eight hours of sleep the night before will give you the energy you need to make it through the exam successfully.