**[Surviving exam season](http://oncampus.macleans.ca/education/2011/12/12/surviving-exam-season/" \o "Surviving exam season)**

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10 ways to study effectively without falling apart

[](http://oncampus.macleans.ca/education/wp-content/uploads/3571102858_54d5b5f58c.jpg)

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Exams, assignments and anxiety: for university students, the end of classes in December is just the beginning. Fortunately, there are ways to make it through without sacrificing your well-being. Here, in no particular order, are 10 tips for surviving and thriving during exam season.

**1. Embrace list making.** Jot down your exam schedule, assignment due dates and important reminders on a calendar. Make a study schedule and stick to it, but don’t forget to pencil in breaks.

**2. Find the right study space.** Whether you prefer a bustling coffee shop or the library’s silent floor, find a proper chair and pick a well-lit space. Steer clear of the ultimate temptations: television and chatty roommates.

**3. Triage.** Let’s face it: you can’t properly analyze an entire Shakespeare anthology in three days. Time is limited, so study the hard subjects first (when you’re most alert) and prioritize material based on urgency and relevance.

**4. Exercise.** Regular workouts are shown to [improve your mood, boost energy and promote better sleep](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676). If all else fails, go outside. Remember outside? Try skating, tobogganing or a jog around the block for sun and exercise.

**5. Put mental health first.** Mental health is just as important as its physical counterpart. Familiarize yourself with your school’s counselling service and don’t be afraid to utilize it. The [Mental Health Commission of Canada](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/default.aspx) and websites like [mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca/index.php) also offer a number of tools and resources.

**6. Eat healthy.** It’s a no-brainer: fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein keep the mind sharp. In a clinch, the perennial granola bar wards off hunger and donut cravings. On that note…

**7. Know your late-night snack hubs.** Coffee shops with extended hours and 24-hour grocery stores are a godsend during exam season. Bonus: late-night snack runs are great opportunities for people watching.

**8. Plan a fun night out.** Studying non-stop isn’t healthy, but neither is going on a bender. Keep things low-key and take in a movie, go dancing with friends or organize a night of coffee and board games.

**9. Stay off Facebook.** Newsflash:All of that wasted time adds up. The siren song of social media is hard to resist, but commit to staying offline during studying hours. You’ll have plenty of time during the holiday season to catch up on your teenage cousin’s thoughts about the weather.

**10. Sleep.** All-nighters aren’t worth it, according to a study published in the January issue of *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*. The dazed, caffeine-addled university student stereotype is a cliché for a reason: sleeping six to eight hours a night maximizes brain function, and the study found that students who regularly pulled all-nighters tended to have lower grades than those who didn’t.