



Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program

Staying Sane While Studying for Exams

- 1) **Lighten up, smile and relax:** The stress associated with law school exams drives many students into unnecessary depression and anxiety. Be sure to integrate fun and laughter while you are studying. The brain operates quicker and more efficiently when we are in a good mood. While your exams are important, if you take them too seriously, you could do yourself long-lasting harm from high levels of stress.
- 2) **Organize your environment:** Where will you be studying? Make sure that space is conducive for studying. Is your chair comfortable? Do you have enough light? Have you cleared out distractions? Do you study better with or without music?
- 3) **Set your schedule:** Fit in breaks and “time to goof off.” Be sure to plan at least 10 to 15 minutes of relaxation, fun, or planned distraction after every 50 minute period of studying.
- 4) **Pick one task at a time:** Your brain operates at its optimum level when you are focusing on one task at a time. If you check your email or search the internet, it could take you several minutes to get back to the task at hand. Save distractions for your designated breaks!
- 5) **Get the food ready:** Plan your diet before you start your study period. Your brain and your body need nutritious foods to aid your concentration and memory. Too much sugar, caffeine, and other stimulants will not help your endeavor in the long run; be sure to keep those to a sensible minimum while studying.
- 6) **Drink water and Get sleep:** During studying or “cramming” sessions, we can forget to take care of our bodies. Your brain needs hydration to work properly; be sure to help it out by drinking at least a glass of water every hour while studying. In addition, it is necessary to sleep for at least 6-8 hours a night in order for your brain to function properly. Research shows that the amount of sleep the night before an exam is a predictor of success.
- 7) **When the exam is done, LET IT GO:** The actual exam is going to go by fast. It’s amazing how quickly 3 or 4 hours can pass when you are focused. However, you still have more to go; so, once the exam is finished, don’t spend time comparing your answers with your colleagues or worrying that other students did better than you. Do not put unnecessary pressure on yourself! Keep your spirits high and move on to the next batch of material you need to study. It will be over before you know it!