

The Ten Steps to Better Test Taking

Here are some ideas from the *Math Study Skills Workbook* by Paul D. Nolting, Ph. D.

Step 1 Use a memory data dump.

When you receive your exam, immediately write down all the information (formulas, facts, figures) you have on your mental cheat sheet on the back of the test or in the margins.

Step 2 Preview the test.

Put your name on the test and start previewing. This requires you to look through the entire test to find the different type of problems and their point values (if given). Put a mark on the questions you can do without thinking. These are the problems you will do first.

Step 3 Do a second memory data dump.

This data dump is for writing down material you may have forgotten about but was jarred from your memory while previewing the test.

Step 4 Develop a test progress schedule.

Decide how many problems you should have completed by halfway through the time given for the test.

Step 5 Answer the easiest problems first.

Solve the problems you marked while previewing the test. Then review your answers. This will boost your confidence and ensure that you get points for the problems you know how to do.

Step 6 Skip difficult problems.

If you find a problem you do not know how to work, read it twice and then skip it.

Step 7 Review the skipped problems.

When you are working on the problems, think about how these problems are similar to other problems you have worked. While reviewing a skipped problem, you may realize how to do one of the other skipped problems. If this happens, go immediately to the problem and work it.

Step 8 Guess at the remaining problems.

Because partial credit is often awarded, do not leave any question blank. Write down whatever you know for the question. Rewriting the question, may jar your memory.

Step 9 Review the test.

Look for careless errors you may have made. Do not talk yourself out of an answer because it does not look nice. Answers to math problems often do not look nice.

Step 10 Use the allowed test time.

Review each problem by checking the answer two or three times. This could mean reworking problems on a separate sheet of paper.

There is no prize for handing your test in first!