

Your Guide to a Healthier Finals Week

Advice from the Salisbury University Counseling Center

- **Schedule your time:** A plan can help you feel more in control and less overwhelmed. Break large assignments into smaller, manageable tasks and set realistic goals. Don't forget to schedule time for sleep, meals, and breaks.
- **Prioritize sleep:** It may be tempting to pull an all-nighter, but getting enough sleep improves focus, memory, and learning - making it far more effective than cramming late into the night.
- **Eat well:** Nutritious meals and limiting caffeine can help improve focus, memory, and concentration. Save time by meal-prepping ahead or keeping healthy, easy-to-heat meals on hand during finals week.
- **Take breaks:** It is important to give yourself breaks, allowing your brain time to relax and recharge. During breaks, make sure you permit yourself to stop thinking about academics, while doing things you enjoy and that give you energy, like talking to friends, going outside, listening to music, or taking a walk. Things like watching TV or checking social media typically do less to help you recharge and are difficult to stop, making it harder transition back to your schoolwork.
- **Write it out:** If distracting thoughts keep popping up, take a few minutes to write them all down. End with a short note to yourself, reassuring that you'll come back to those thoughts after you finish studying or complete your task.
- **Managing phone distractions:** If your phone keeps pulling your attention, try turning it off or temporarily deleting the apps you tend to check most. The people who care about you will understand if you don't respond right away.
- **Make it fun:** Use dry-erase or window markers to write reminders or key terms on your mirror or window. Try color-coding with different pens or note cards, and add silly GIFs to your digital flashcards to keep things light.
- **Engage your senses:** Try chewing the same flavor of gum or mint while studying and during your exam. Familiar sensory cues may help trigger memory recall.
- **Try body doubling:** Studying near another person, even if they're working on something completely different, can help you stay focused and accountable.
- **Change it up:** If you're feeling stuck or struggling to concentrate, change your environment by taking a quick walk or relocating to a different study spot. A change of scenery can help reset your focus.
- **Reward your progress:** Celebrate each completed study session with something you enjoy, a favorite snack, a short walk, a song, or a quick chat with a friend. When you've met your goals for the day, treat yourself to something bigger, like takeout, a campus event, a game night, or your favorite show. Real rewards that feel good can help your brain stay engaged and make the whole process more doable.

