

But what if I have to cram?

Even with good planning, there are times when you have to cram. Here are some helpful hints.

Make choices

Pick out the most important points and learn them really well. Use 75% of your cramming time to drill key points and 25% on the rest.

Make a plan

Time is short. Choose what you want to study; determine how much time you have; and set strict timelines.

Use mind map review sheets and cue cards

Condense the material you have chosen to learn into mind maps. Practice by redrawing the mind maps. Put each separate key point from your mind map onto cue cards and drill yourself regularly.

Recite, Recite, Recite

No time to move information into long term storage so **repetitive recitation** is the order of the day! Recitation will 'burn' the facts into your brain. One way to do this is to tape-record yourself and then play back the tape before you sleep and again when you awake.

Relax

When you cram, you are not learning the information well. Therefore, if you experience anxiety during the exam, you may forget what you have studied. Use relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety.

Don't 'should' yourself

If you start your cramming session beating yourself up with statements like, "I should have studied earlier," by the time you get to studying you might feel too guilty and depressed to continue. Instead, accept the truth, i.e. you would be in a better position if you had started earlier, and then tell yourself you will do so next time. Remind yourself that you are human and will learn from your mistakes.

Source: Ellis, D. (2000). *Becoming a Master Student*. Canadian 3rd Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. p. 185