

### 1. Prepare Things the Night Before

Preparing certain things the night before an exam can help distress and slow down your morning to allow yourself to wake up and get ready with ease and peace of mind. Things to prepare the night before should be, first and foremost, your materials. Sharpen your 4-6 wooden #2 pencils and have them ready to go with your calculator and spare batteries. That way you know that you have them, you know where they are, and you know that they're ready. Also allow yourself to get enough sleep, which is probably more than you usually get. Keep in mind that if you're generally running late in the morning, set your alarm(s) for a few minutes earlier to allow yourself that extra buffer of time so that you're not feeling rushed. Go to bed full and hydrated.

### 2. Wake Up Your Mind and Body

It's very important that in the morning you're focusing on waking up both your mind and body so that you're wholeheartedly ready to take on a long test. A great way to do this is to put on music while you're in the shower and getting ready. If you have a playlist of your favorite songs, chances are the music will get your body energized and you'll either sing along with the songs in your head or out loud, which is allowing your brain to start processing information and warming it up to start remembering information.

### 3. Wear Appropriate Attire

When getting dressed, think of the testing room and environment over the weather. Even if it's 90 degrees outside, think of what the test environment will be like. Chances are, it'll be air-conditioned and you'll be sitting there for hours so make sure you dress prepared to stay at a comfortable temperature. If you still choose to wear warm weather clothing, be sure to bring a sweater or light jacket in case the room is chilly. The same goes for the opposite; if the weather is cold outside, make sure to layer your clothing so that you can remove layers during the test if you begin to feel hot. Keeping your body comfortable helps to minimize distractions and external effects on your abilities while taking the test.

### 4. Eat a Smart Breakfast

Even if you're not a breakfast person, eating breakfast is essential before a long test. After all, this isn't just another day at school. Your breakfast should include necessary vitamins as well as keep you energized and full. While cereal can be a great source of calcium and fiber (depending on what cereal you eat), you probably won't be kept full for very long. Bagels are a great way to keep yourself full, and spreading peanut butter on them instead of butter or cream cheese makes them a lighter choice with more energizing nutrients. Pairing that with a Greek yogurt and/or a glass of chocolate milk ensures that you're getting a well-rounded breakfast that will keep you fuller longer. Hunger is just another distraction that you don't need. Work on avoiding foods with high sodium

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and fat contents because those can make you get that “fat and sleepy” feeling. In addition, you want to avoid these foods along with greasy and sugary foods in order to help prevent any stomach upsets. It’s the same concept as an athlete eating safe foods before an event; you want your body to be in its best state.

### 5. Warm Up Your Brain

While you’re eating breakfast and getting ready during the morning, try to read something small and short. An article or part of a book is a good choice. This gets your brain in the mood of reading and processing information that it gained visually. Reading lightly before an exam is the same effect as stretching before working out. You’re about to exercise your brain so it needs to be warmed up to perform its best as well. Do not read material related to the test. For example, don’t go over math concepts and theories before the Math II SAT subject test. You want your mind to be ready but you don’t want to psych yourself out before the test. Cramming – both the night before and the morning of – can have damaging effects on the information that you already store.

### 6. Bring Effective “Snacks”

Whether it be the [ACT](#), [SAT](#), or an AP test, you’ll have breaks in which you’re allowed to eat a snack and get a drink of water. Take advantage of these opportunities, as they are ways to refresh your body and mind and give them a “second wind” so to speak. Bring a water bottle that you can refill because staying hydrated is the first step in keeping your body happy and healthy. For snacks, bring things such as apples, oranges, grapes and granola bars so that you can eat them quickly and they give you immediate energy. In addition to snacks, bring mints and gum. You can eat these during the testing periods and they both help to keep you awake, alert, and focused because your body is physically performing an action rather than simply sitting there reading. The gum and mints should be peppermint and/or spearmint flavored in order to be most effective.

### 7. Allow Ample Time to Arrive

Nothing is more stressful to the proctor, the other testers, and yourself than arriving late. Allow time for traffic and unexpected delays so that you can arrive at the testing location with time to spare. This allows you to get comfortable with your surroundings and calm down before you embark on the exam. You also don’t want to end up wasting your money by being late and not being able to take the exam at all.

Tests are taken seriously and they should be treated rightly so. Prepare yourself properly for these important mornings so that you don’t fall short of your full capability. Following the above steps can help you achieve a more successful morning and test – and if nothing else – give you the confidence you need to excel on the exam.