

Midterm Sleep Sheet

A calm plan for test week

Educational only, not medical advice.



Here's the good news for test week: **sleep is part of studying**. Sleep helps your brain lock in what you learned that day. NIH says sleep after learning helps "save and cement" new information, and CDC says enough sleep can help **attention and memory**.^{1,2}

STUDY IN THE DAYTIME. SLEEP AT NIGHT.

How much sleep?

Teens, 13 to 17	8 to 10 hours
Adults, 18 and older	7 or more hours

Source: CDC.¹

Why the whole night matters

- ☐ **Most REM sleep comes late in the night.** Your REM periods get longer as the night goes on, so most of your REM sleep happens in the second half of the night.³
- ☐ **REM is tied to memory and mood.** NIH says REM seems to help link related memories and process emotional ones. So when you cut sleep short, you cut REM.²
- ☐ **Short sleep affects the body, too.** Good sleep supports your metabolism¹ and helps keep a healthy balance of the hormones that make you feel hungry or full.⁴ In a lab study, sleep loss raised evening levels of the stress hormone cortisol.⁵

3 sleep habits for test week

- ☐ **Keep the same bedtime and wake time** every day, even during test week.¹
- ☐ **Put the phone down at least 30 minutes before bed.** CDC suggests turning off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.¹
- ☐ **Skip caffeine in the afternoon and evening.** It's one of the habits CDC lists to help you sleep better.¹

Spread it out, don't cram

- ☐ **Cramming fades faster.** It can get you through tomorrow, but studies show material studied in spaced sessions is remembered better than material crammed all at once.^{6,7}
- ☐ **Short sessions over a few days stick longer.** So plan a few short study sessions in the days before each test.⁷

Test morning:

1. **Eat a real breakfast** and drink some water.
2. **Take a few slow breaths** before the test starts.
3. **Read every question first.**

Pulled an all nighter? Please get a ride instead of driving. CDC's NIOSH says being awake for 17 hours impairs you about as much as a blood alcohol level of 0.05%.⁸

Not medical advice; see your doctor for ongoing sleep problems.

Sources

1. CDC, About Sleep (May 15, 2024): <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html>
 2. NIH News in Health, Sleep On It (Apr 2013): <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2013/04/sleep-it>
 3. StatPearls, Physiology, REM Sleep (NCBI Bookshelf): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK531454/>
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 5. Leproult R, et al. Sleep loss results in an elevation of cortisol levels the next evening. Sleep, 1997: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9415946/>
 6. Cepeda NJ, et al. Distributed practice in verbal recall tasks. Psychological Bulletin, 2006: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16719566/>
 7. Dunlosky J, et al. Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 2013: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266>
 8. CDC NIOSH, Driver Fatigue on the Job: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/motor-vehicle/driver-fatigue/>
- All accessed Oct 18, 2026. Dr. Jocko, ER physician and author of *Quit & Get Rich*.