Learning is half the battle!
What else exam preparation can do for you...

Of course, acquiring knowledge is a key part of preparing for an examination. However, our tips for everything else will not just make the exam itself easier.

Phases of learning

- Acquire knowledge
- Consolidate and develop an understanding
- Revise

Phases of exam preparation

Clarify requirements and draw up a timetable
What content will be relevant to the exam? What will I actually be tested on?
Can I look at past written examination papers?
How long do I have to learn the material?
Tip: do some learning every day—ideally in set blocks.

Learn (acquisition, consolidation and revision)
You will need to include revision time specifically in your timetable.
Tip: make your successes visible—throw a ball of paper into a jar for each block to give yourself a visual representation of the hours you’ve spent learning.

Check your recollection and understanding
Tip: work in groups, as this allows you to check your understanding, check your recollection and revise at the same time.

TRY IT
Simulate an exam situation in your group: working in 10-minute blocks, take turns to act as moderator for your group and ask questions that could also crop up in your exam.
Be ready by the day before yesterday!
Can’t be done, of course. However, you should plan your time realistically.

Planning your time realistically breaks a huge mountain of work down into a large number of small and manageable tasks. Time management tips:

- Zeiten realistisch planen: „Was mache ich die ganze Woche über?“
- Freizeit in den Plan mit einbauen: „Ich kann nur so gut arbeiten, wie ich mich auch wieder erhole.“
- Konkret Planen: „Morgen um 15 Uhr fange ich an!“
- Erfolgsgestützt lernen → Pomodoro-Technik
- Lernzeit schrittweise steigern: 1 Std. → 1 ½ Std. → 2 Std. → 3 Std. → 5 Std.

TRY IT

The Pomodoro technique

Choose a task
Set a timer for 25 minutes
Work until it goes off, then draw a star
Take a 5-minute break
Take a longer break after 4 stars

The ALPEN method: planning your days’ learning

Write your tasks down: make a to-do list for the day

Estimate how long you will need: plan your time realistically

Plan in buffers: only allot 60% of your learning time

Make decisions: set priorities

Follow up: take stock of and reflect on the day’s achievements
The best is yet to come - Look to the future with a sense of purpose

Successfully setting goals is in itself a major step toward achieving them. Tips for setting goals:

Internal goals
These are goals that you set yourself, without being influenced by anyone else, and that you then achieve under your own responsibility. They may be closely associated with a high level of motivation for achievement.

External goals
These are goals that are set and made binding by other people. You can inwardly embrace or reject them, which can have a significant influence on the extent to which they are achieved.

TRY IT

Formulating goals using the SMART method

Set yourself some SMART goals, either for your personal life or your studies, and increase the likelihood of actually achieving them.

Specific → Make your goals as concrete and specific as possible.

Measurable → Define qualitative and quantitative parameters for achieving your goals.

Attractive → Plan your goals in such a way that you will actually enjoy achieving them.

Realistic → Plan your goals in such a way that they can be achieved with the resources and within the timeframe available to you.

Time-bound → Plan binding deadlines for your goals (what do I need to do by when?).
Launching a career after university: Career guidance during your studies

- What can and do I want to do for a living after leaving university?
- Will my degree program get me any closer to my dream job?
- Is there even such a thing as a dream job?
- How can I get professional experience while I’m still a student?
- Is the standard period of study more important than practical or professional experience?

Ever asked yourself these questions?
Students often put off answering them until just before they graduate, at which point they are suddenly faced with the prospect of applying for jobs—and all the questions need quick answers.
Here are a few tips that will help you find suitable answers early on to your questions about launching a career after university. They will make sure that your career guidance and career planning during your studies are a success and, most importantly, a source of fun.

**TRY IT**

**Tip 1:** start thinking early, i.e. in your first few semesters, about what kind of job you would like to do after university.

**Tip 2:** again during your first few semesters, gather information on the fields of work you have in mind.

**Tip 3:** use part-time jobs, internships and volunteering as an opportunity to gain real-life experience in the fields of work you would like to get into after university.

**Tip 4:** throughout your studies, make use of the career guidance services offered by your degree program, departments, institutes and faculties as well as the Career Service.

**Tip 5:** Check the web page [www.uni-bonn.de/careerservice](http://www.uni-bonn.de/careerservice) regularly for workshops, advice sessions, careers events and the like.

If you have any questions about career guidance and career planning during your studies, you are welcome to ask them today at the Career Service’s advice stand.
Beating procrastination!

Your apartment has never been so clean, but your lecture notes are still sitting untouched on your desk? We’ve got some tips for fighting procrastination!

There is more than one way to put things off

**The structured approach**

- Part and parcel of structuring and prioritizing your work.
- Can help with time management.

**The unstructured approach**

- Procrastination: shunting back urgent work that needs doing in favor of unimportant things.
- You look for excuses for your behavior.

**How I can stop procrastinating and start learning:**

- Be aware of your own behavior: “When do I procrastinate? How? What are the consequences? What do I need to stop doing in order to start learning?”
- Have your goal firmly in mind: “I need an answer to the question of why exactly I’m doing this.”
- Spend five minutes starting your task the day before: “Carrying on is a lot easier than getting started, and getting started is a lot easier if I only need to do five minutes.”

**TRY IT**

Illustrate your successes visually. Split your tasks up into small chunks. For every (learning) unit you complete, you’re allowed to throw a ball of paper into a jar!
Tea or coffee? How do I make the right decision?

We make about 20,000 of them every day. Here are some tips for the most important ones.

Gut vs. head

“Gut decisions always make sense for things we have a lot of experience with.” (based loosely on the words of Gerd Gigerenzer, psychologist)
→ They are underpinned by intuition and are made quickly.

Going with your head, by contrast, is the sensible option if we have no experience to draw on.
→ Such decisions are based on weighing up the pros and cons.

Aids to decision-making

• Talk about the matter a lot so you can get your own thoughts in order.
• Go through your options and evaluate them (list of pros and cons).
• Don’t be afraid to retreat into yourself: allow yourself to be alone and seek some peace and quiet.

TRY IT

The 10-10-10 model: What will I think about it in 10 minutes, 10 months, 10 years?

“Human beings are free, and freedom means: making decisions. And this freedom is a thing of beauty. Previous generations won it through their struggle, and we should enjoy it. It is a glorious achievement of our society.”
(Prof. Dr. Dagmar Borchers, University of Bremen)
Time to lean back and relax

In the daily hustle and bustle and stress of university life, it’s easy to forget to look out for number one. Find out here how you can take care of yourself.

Self-care tips
- Make time for the things that help you to live well and improve your mental and physical health. Ideally, block out weekly self-care sessions in your timetable.
- Know and respect your own limitations.
- Treat yourself nicely and praise yourself for what you’ve achieved so far.
- Don’t place too many demands on yourself and allow yourself to be yourself.
- Have the courage to say “no” to activities that you really can’t or don’t want to do right now.

Needs that every person has
Looking out for the physical and social needs that every person has is a good starting point for self-care, e.g.:
- Eating a wide variety of healthy and tasty foods
- Enough sleep (seven to nine hours a day)
- Enough exercise (at least 30 minutes a day)
- Maintaining social contact

Highly personal, individual needs
You must first identify your highly personal needs that do you yourself good. Think about what things you need for your own well-being, e.g.:
- Hobbies
- Spending time with friends
- A good book
- Listening to music
- Letting your thoughts run free

TRY IT
Give yourself some inner moments of happiness: cast your mind back to a point in your life when you were particularly happy. Close your eyes and imagine this moment again as clearly as you can. Experience this feeling of happiness all over again.
You’ve already made it halfway through your degree program, and it’s time to take note of your successes and be proud of yourself. Here are some tips for appreciating what you’ve achieved:

**Self-affirmation vs. self-doubt**

- **Self-affirmation:** The ability to acknowledge, appreciate and be proud of your own qualities and strengths.
- **Self-doubt:** Finding it hard to attribute successes to your own abilities and putting them down to luck instead.
- **Confirmation:** Confirmation that you have done something right or are particularly good at it.
- **Doubting:** Doubting that you have enough talent and skills, e.g. for studying.

**Self-affirmation tips:**

- Daily self-reflection: think about your successes to date and ask yourself questions such as “Which of my goals have I already reached?”, “What good things have I already achieved?”
- Reward yourself: if something has gone well, don’t shrug it off as a matter of course. Instead, reward yourself regularly for your achievements.
- Find yourself some mentors: a good way to clear up any uncertainty about your own behavior is to talk to other people, especially someone you can confide in.
- Be careful, however, as too much self-affirmation can make you deaf and blind to (justified) criticism and lead to smugness.

**TRY IT**

Write down all of your skills and abilities—these can even be small things that only you know about. Don’t try to compare yourself with other people in the process. Just because someone or other can do something better than you doesn’t mean that you don’t have that skill.