Taking a Math Exam

- **Test Taking Strategies**
  - Repetition is important. You learn how to solve problems by doing them, so keep practicing, but don't do it blindly. Make sure you learn how to recognize when/why you should use a specific method to solve a problem.
  - Work on practice problems for each topic, ranging in varying levels of difficulty.
  - When practicing, try to solve the problem on your own first. Then look at the answer or seek help if you are having trouble.
  - Mix up the order of the questions from various topics when you are reviewing so you'll learn when to use a specific method/formula by the type of problem, not the order.
  - Make up a sheet or flashcards with all the formulas you need to know and memorize all the formulas on the sheet.
  - When you get your exam, write down all the key formulas on the margin of your paper. If you forget them when you're in the middle of the test you can look back at the formula. This also eliminates the additional stress of constantly trying to recall the formula.
  - Read the directions carefully and don't forget to answer all parts of the question.
  - Make estimates for your answers. Even if you only estimate the order of magnitude (tens, hundreds, thousands, etc) you will have a better idea if your answer is correct.
  - Show all your work (especially when partial credit is awarded) and write as legibly as possible.
  - Even if you know the final answer is wrong, don't erase your work. You may get partial credit for using the correct procedure.
  - Check over your test after you are finished. If you have time, redo the problem on a separate sheet of paper and verify that you arrive at the same answer the second time. Look for careless mistakes such as correct decimal placement, sign errors, correctly interpreted directions, correctly copied problem, arithmetic, etc.

- **Test Preparation and Study Strategies**
  - Preparation for your first test should begin immediately after the first class. You should be studying, completing homework assignments, and reviewing study materials on a regular basis.
  - Budget your time, making certain you have sufficient time to study so that you are well prepared for the test.
  - Go to review sessions when available and pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test. Take notes and ask your instructor questions about items you may be confused about.
  - Ask the instructor to specify the areas that will be emphasized on the test.
  - Make sure you get there early for the test; it's a good time for the instructor to give out more hints or the format of the test.
  - Go over any material from practice tests, homework, sample problems, review material, textbook, class notes, etc.
  - Eat before a test, but avoid heavy foods.
  - Do not try to cram for an exam.
  - Put the main ideas, information, and formulas onto a sheet that can be quickly reviewed many times, allowing you to retain the key concepts that will be on the test.
  - Try to show up at least 10 minutes before the test will start.
  - Set your alarm. Set a backup alarm. Have someone call/text you. DO NOT BE LATE.
  - Go to the bathroom before the exam.
• **Common Test Taking Errors**
  - Misreading Direction Errors
    - Always carefully read all the directions
  - Careless Errors
    - Always review the test
  - Concept Errors
    - Understand the relevant rules and properties
  - Application Errors
    - Be familiar with the material and try to predict test questions
  - Study Errors
    - Concentrate on where your study efforts failed and how to correct them

• **Avoiding Test-Taking Errors**
  - Find out about common mistakes in the topic being tested
  - Review the last step in problems
  - Set a time limit for each question
  - Check questions you felt were easy
  - Compare scratch work to answers
  - Don’t leave questions blank

• **10 Popular Steps to Better Test-Taking** (a general review)
  - Memory Data Dump
    - Write down information you may forget (formulas, dates, places, etc.)
  - Preview Test
    - Write your name on the test and review the entire test
  - Second Memory Data Dump
    - Write down additional important information you may forget
  - Test Progress Schedule
    - Decide the best way to get the most points in the least time
  - Answer Easy Questions
    - First, answer the easiest questions with the most points
  - Skip Difficult Answers
    - Read each question twice and set a time limit for solving it (you can always come back to it later)
  - Review Skipped Questions
    - Recall related information about each question
  - Guess at Remaining Answers
    - Do not leave a question blank
  - Review Entire Test
    - Look for misread directions and careless errors
  - Use All Of Your Test Time
    - Stopping to early can mean lost points on your test
References

- http://testtakingtips.com
- http://people.richland.edu/james/misc/testtake.html