

**Tips for Foundation Exam and Studying based on “Learning How to Learn” Course**

1. Routinely sleep and exercise. These two items promote long term retention better than anything else.

2. Start studying for the exam several weeks before the exam. Repeatedly studying in many sessions allows concepts to be instilled in long term memory better through more iterations of sleep and strengthening neural connections.

3. Have BOTH focused study sessions where you only work on a specific type of problem (for example, pick a day when you focus on linked lists or mathematical induction), AND study sessions where you mix everything together (taking a practice test or bouncing from question to question. We learn more deeply when we can identify ideas out of context, but the focused studying is needed to strengthen a specific skill.

4. Study in multiple locales/situations. We tend to recall information better if we have practice recalling it in different environments.

5. Focus on “recall” and “testing” as opposed to reading over study materials. The latter often gives students the illusion that they understand and can apply the material. The former forces students to do what they’ll be asked to do on the test and actually improves one’s understanding better than just reading over notes does.

6. When taking the exam, read over all the questions relatively quickly, so that your subconscious mind can go to work on the harder ones in diffuse mode. This is better than first reading the hardest question on the test 15 minutes from the end of the test. In the former situation, your brain has already started “working” on the problem so to speak, without you being aware of it. (This is an analogy and not a perfect description of what happens.)