

Academic Skills

Science and Engineering Tests

Read over the entire exam before writing anything.

Choose the problem or question that seems easiest to you and do it first. Continue to do the problems in order of increasing difficulty.

STAY IN MOTION!!! Work on a problem until you get stuck. Think about it for a minute, and if nothing comes to you, drop it and go on to another problem. *Don't spend 30 minutes sweating out a few points on a problem and run out of time, leaving a 40-point problem untouched.*

Show your work. Give enough detail so that both you and the grader can tell what you're trying to do. If you're wrong and you didn't write down your work, you get a zero; if you're right but didn't show your work, you could be suspected of cheating.

Watch out for significant figures. Some instructors don't appreciate answers like 23.694028, even if that's what the calculator says.

Think partial credit. Put something down for each part of every problem. If you don't have time to solve it completely, tell what you'd do if you had more time.

Keep your work legible. If an instructor can't read what you wrote, you aren't likely to get full credit and you may not get any.

Don't panic. If you get sweaty or start hyperventilating, put down your pencil, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and consciously relax any muscles that you're clenching (jaw, neck, stomach). When you're calmer, go back to work.

If you have time at the end, check your solutions. Did you answer each part of every question? Did you answer the question(s) asked? Do your answers look reasonable? Do your calculations check out? (Save this one for last.)

Adapted from: Richard M. Felder, North Carolina State University; James E. Stice, University of Texas at Austin