

# Use It or Lose It: Reviewing Lecture Notes

Time spent reviewing your notes within 24 hours of the lecture is time well spent. Research shows that if you spend 15 minutes reviewing your notes within a few hours after the lecture, you can increase your understanding of the material by 50%. On the other hand, you will lose an average of 80% of the information in the lecture if you delay longer than 24 hours to review your notes.

Here are some helpful ways to work with your notes:

- **Edit your notes** by writing out any “shorthand” or symbols that you may not recognize later.
- **Add recall words or key questions in the left margins** of your notes. Later these words and questions can serve as a pre-test when you are preparing for an exam.
- **Find some way of outlining or reworking your notes.** Organize them into key points and minor points—so that they read easily. You might decide to use some color coding to highlight terms, key concepts, formulas, or dates.
- **Include your own examples** in your notes so that you can test your understanding of the material as well as your ability to apply the information.
- **Add information from the textbook**, such as brief phrases and book page numbers so that you can easily refer back to longer or more complex passages in the textbook.
- **Use your notes to make flashcards.** Carry them with you and use them to review when you have free time.
- **Check your notes for accuracy and understanding.** If something is not clear, try to clarify the meaning by using your textbook or by asking a question in the next class session.
- **Compare your notes with those of other students.** You may find varying perspectives or something you missed.
- If you are a visual learner, **create mind maps** from your notes that help you see relationships between concepts described in lecture.
- If you are an auditory learner, **recite out loud the key points** in your notes.
- When it comes to reviewing your notes, remember this: **the sooner the better!**