

Here are some study tips from Robert Lieberman, LSC Physics Program.

- First of all, don't be intimidated by Physics (No matter what you've heard from others). Physics is about how things work in the world in which you live. It explains everything, from how cars run to the way electronic circuits function in your CD player, television and cell phone.
- Think positively. Problem solving is actually fun if you're in the right frame of mind. (What you learn in Physics is a transferable skill applicable to all the rest of your life).
- Attend all lectures and read the material to be covered BEFORE you attend. (Otherwise you're wasting a lot of energy taking down notes that may be useless)
- It's better to do a little physics everyday, rather than trying to do everything in one long stretch. You can't cram physics. It's like learning a whole new language. You need to learn the vocabulary and grammar piece by piece.
- Never, ever pull All-Nighters!
- Use the best hours of your day to study physics (and your other difficult subjects). For some people that's mornings, others afternoons, still others evenings. Find your optimal time.
- Read the text book more than just once. And keep testing yourself to see if you understand what you're reading. (Physics textbooks aren't novels. They need to be read line by line.)
- Solving problems is not a spectator sport. You have to do it all by yourself. If you're truly stuck, seek a little help, then try to go further. Once you've broken through the wall of a tough problem, your brain will never lose the approach.
- Try to visualize a problem by drawing a diagram.

- Try to break problems down into manageable pieces.
- Be sure that your units are consistent (this will help you discover errors).
- Try verbalizing your problem with friends. Sometimes simply putting something into words helps clarify it.
- If you can't solve a problem, sometimes it helps just to relax. Let it go. Do something else and revisit it a little later.
- When you get a numerical answer, see if it makes sense. Is the number too big? Too small?
- Above all, don't panic during an exam. Start by looking it over to get a feel for its scope. Begin with the first problem. If you can't solve it, calmly go to the next (your brain will be working on it in the background, believe it or not). If necessary, even go on to the third before revisiting the first two.
- When you get an exam back, don't throw it away. Go over it and see where you went wrong. Learn from your mistakes. (Exams are meant to help you identify your weaknesses.)
- Remember, you're here at Cornell to LEARN, not get grades. No one will ask you in ten years, much less five, what grade you got in a specific course. But you will be asked to use your brain to solve complex problems.