

## CALC ADVICE FROM YOUR RPMs

*Use these tips to learn calculus the WU way!*

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM RPM HOURS

- Hours are walk-in, no appointment necessary.
- Students are usually helped in the order in which they arrive.
- Bring your work, including something to write on/with.
- You might be prompted to work in a group if it is busy and the RPM is helping other students when you come in.
- RPMs are not responsible for helping you to submit webwork problems.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

- [WUMath](#) (syllabi, old exams, professor office hours,...)
- [Webwork](#)
- [Calc Help Room Hours](#) (TA Walk-In Help)
- [RPM Hours](#) (Peer-led Walk-In Help)
- [Pauls Online Math Notes](#) (calc notes and cheat sheets)
- [PurpleMath](#) (algebra and precalculus refreshers)
- [Khan Academy](#) (videos and practice problems)
- [Wolfram Alpha](#) (lots of information)

### HOW TO LOG ON TO AND USE WEBWORK

- The easiest way to access webwork is to go to the [wumath.wustl.edu](http://wumath.wustl.edu) page, click on webwork, and choose “Math xxx - your professor”.
- Stuck on a problem?
  - Use the “Email Instructor” button at the bottom of the page when you are working on the problem.
    - This will send a message to the instructor that has a link directly to that problem with your progress, which is extremely helpful.
  - In your message, do not say things like “I know that webwork is wrong because my [RPM/TA/calculator/WolframAlpha/literally-everyone-I-know] told me so.” Instead, give a brief description of what you have done so far and what you suspect you might be misunderstanding or doing wrong, if possible.
- Don’t leave your webwork until the last minute. Start the problem set when it opens, and work on it over the whole week. Ask your RPM questions days before the problem set is due—they will be impressed with your time management skills!

### OPTIONAL/SUGGESTED PROBLEMS

Your professor will most likely assign optional problems for every section of the textbook. These problems are meant as a guide and measuring stick for you. For example, the professor might assign problems 1-40 from a section for optional work. This doesn’t mean that you should do every one of these problems. Instead, start working on a few from the beginning, middle, and end of the list. Maybe a total of 5-8 problems. Afterwards, look back over the optional problems that you skipped. If you can see right away how to do them—not the answer itself, but how to GET the answer—then you’re good to go. If not, it would be wise to work on another few problems until you can.

Remember: the best way to learn a subject like calculus is repetition.

These optional problems are for your benefit, and the fact that they are not graded should not deter you from working on a few of them.

### HOW TO READ THE BOOK

- You don’t need to read the book word for word.
- It’s a great additional resource to go over equations and concepts that you didn’t understand in lecture.

- Try reading the section BEFORE lecture. You might not understand it all when you read it, but it might click during lecture.
- Use another calculus text or internet resource if you don't like the style of the assigned text.

#### ORGANIZING NOTES/EQUATIONS/ETC

- Just because you have a notecard does not mean you should fill every square centimeter with equations- if you can't read it, it doesn't do you any good.
- Find a method that works for you (box definitions, [bracket examples], highlight equations,...).
- When doing an equation sheet for reference or notecard for exam, make sure to put like equations together, especially when you need more than one equation for a type of problem.

#### OLD EXAMS

- Old exams are located at this website: <https://wumath.wustl.edu/math-exam-archives>
- They are a fantastic resources when studying for exams.
  - Be sure to actually try to problems before looking at the solutions because it is much more beneficial than simply scrolling through the solutions.
- The old exams most relevant to you are the ones written by your professor. You can find out which ones these are by looking at old syllabi, which are also located on the wustl math website.

#### HOW TO STUDY FOR EXAMS

Everyone has different methods when it comes to studying, but the following will help you get the most out of your time.

- Read over your notes and textbook. Doing both might seem like a bit much, but there may be something in the book that you didn't have a chance to write down, or something in your notes that your professor found important that wasn't in the book.
- Be aware of what you don't understand and focus on that topic. Do/redo optional problems relating to said topic, whether they be from the book or from webwork.
- Find practice exams and take them. Check the answer key, figure out what you got wrong and why, and retake the exams after looking over the material.
- If you don't understand a certain topic, you can look it up online at one of the websites listed above.
- Don't forget the Calc Help Room in Lopata Hall 323. The TAs are there Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm.
- If you still need help, go to office hours! Professors would love nothing more than to help you out!

#### HOW TO PREPARE FOR OFFICE HOURS

Go into office hours knowing what it is you need help with. It could be how to do a specific homework problem, why a certain step was taken in solving a problem, or to clarify a concept you can't get your head around. Take notes while they explain as well.

Remember that your professor is a person, too:

- Smile and say "hello" when you arrive. You could even ask them how their day has been, or whether they had a nice weekend. Thank them for their time, and say "goodbye" when you leave.
- Your professor has spent a lot of time thinking about and doing mathematics. Chances are, they like the subject. Keep in mind that any difficulties you are having are not insurmountable, and math is not the root of all evil. In particular, don't be dismissive about a topic that you have heard about in class, or tell them that you "can't do math". Instead, ask why the concept of continuity is important, or what series are used for, etc. It is natural for you to not see the big picture sometimes, and the professor is the best person to ask about that to help you put it all into context.