



drishti

Do's and Don't's on Examination Eve

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The evening and the night before the examination day is crucial. *How you spend this night will be a factor in your performance. Here are the tried and tested recommendations that should work for sincere aspirants.*

Food And Sleep — Most Important

- **Sleep early, sleep well, set two alarms.** You may be sleeping late and irregularly in the last week or month before the exam. But the night before the D-day is too crucial to be deprived of sleep and peace of mind. You must have heard of stories where people clear Prelims even when they didn't sleep the night before it. Don't get moved by such stories and ensure that you sleep for a healthy six to eight hours; a sleep-deprived you will make errors in examination because you won't be able to focus in the exam hall. If you have insomnia and need sleeping pills, then plan that well ahead. And set two alarms on different machines (smart phone and alarm clock) and ensure they are far enough from bed and set to full volume.
- **Eat early; eat tried and tested food.** Light meal is important at night; do not stuff your stomach with food, you need to feel good in the morning and not worry about constipation, digestion and acidity. Also, do not experiment with food; avoid junk food, carbonated drinks or alcohol. Eat what is known to sit well with your stomach.
- **Do not think on bed; save your brain for the exam day.** It is natural to worry about your prospects in the PT exam. And almost twelve hours before it, when you are in bed, your mind will remind you of it more than anything else. Try to take control of your mind; tell yourself that 'all is well.' Either you will think and worry, or you will sleep. Worrying won't improve anything, including your scores in the PT exam, in the morning.
- **What's your morning food?** Be kind on your stomach; don't give it surprises. You need to feel light and alert; food will play a role in that. Do you like oats porridge, with some banana and honey?
- **What are you eating between exam sessions?** If you are with family, then you are probably carrying lunch to the exam hall. Carry food suitable for the season; choose

fruits, light whole wheat bread sandwiches. Avoid surveying the area in lunch time for new food; look after your stomach for some more hours; eat carelessly after the PT.

- **Avoid hyperactive friends, relatives and strangers.** There are ‘forever worried’ aspirants who live in perpetual fear of UPSC and imagine rejection all the time instead of focusing on preparation. Avoid such people; keep off paranoia and believe in yourself. Also, a family member or a distant relative could be bothersome and should be avoided. Avoid talking to strangers in Metro or bus to exam hall; people generally have an exalted view of UPSC and IAS and they may hail or praise you unnecessarily. Don’t be a part of the emotional theatrical behaviour of others.

Logistics: Admit Card, Stationery, Money, Travel

- **Keep the e-Admit Card ready.** Keep the legibly printed admit card ready, on your table. Preferably, keep extra copies in your bag and other pockets; take no chances. To make it fool proof, upload a soft copy to a cloud drive such as Google drive and memorize the short link (e.g. goo. gl/EXAMple). The UPSC rules also say that “*you are responsible for safe custody of the e-Admit Card and in the event of any other person using this e-Admit Card, the onus lies on you to prove that you have not used the service of any impersonator.*” Also, “*candidates who do not have clear photographs on the e-admit card will have to bring a **photo identity proof** viz. Aadhar Card, Driving Licence, Passport, Voter I Card etc. and two passport size photographs one for each session for appearing in the examination with an undertaking.*”
- **Keep black ball point pens ready.** Your stationery box should have black ball point pens to fill the OMR sheet. You may carry pencils also for rough work. One black pen may ditch you; keep two or more with you preferably of the make that you like and which does not leak or bloat when used to fill circle.
- **Read the instructions given by UPSC.** Not many people do that; you don’t have to learn from them. Read all instructions the UPSC gives and check out the “Poster” containing instructions displayed outside the Examination Hall.
- **Plan your exam-day travel before bed.** You should have Google mapsearched the examination centre and should know its location. If you are going with friends, then you should have planned the taxi or decided about using Ola, Uber and so on. Remember, you must reach the exam hall at least twenty minutes before the scheduled start which is 9:30 AM. Account for rain, Metro breakdown or your Metro card failure, traffic jam, tyre puncture etc. In short, give yourself a headstart. “*You will not be admitted to the examination if you report 10 minutes after the scheduled commencement of the examination.*”
- **Check the UPSC website.** It does happen some times that the UPSC publishes notification on change on centres (though it doesn’t happen just a day before the exam). You won’t lose much by checking the website for any updates just the same.
- **Decide your exam-day clothes.** Avoid clothes that don’t suit the season (e.g. wear cotton, avoid itchy stuff if in Delhi). Check weather update; keep umbrella, sunglasses,

extra spectacles ready if needed.

- **Decide on last-minute revision material.** If you need last-minute reassurances (revision minutes before gate entry or during break) then decide and keep your material in bag. Many people study around exam halls; it is a personal choice. It is best avoided. Easier said than done. And on the PT day, if you are among the lucky ones who can afford to visit homes in break time, then *do not take a nap and fall asleep on cosy home bed.*
- **Keep paper, tissues, drinking water in bag.** Keep old newspaper in bag to handle food or to use for sitting in the park or on pavements during the break. Keep tissues, potable water too in your bag.
- **What's your roll number, aspirant?** Memorise it; you will need it over the next year if you are a serious candidate. On the PT day, you will not need to see your admit card to find your seat location in the exam hall. Also, any *"error in filling in details in the OMR sheet especially with regard to Roll Number and Test Booklet Series Code, will render the answer sheet liable for rejection."*
- **Carry a wrist watch to exam hall; no IT gadgets, no valuable items.** Avoid carrying a phone, Bluetooth devices, calculator in PT exam (however, non-programmable type calculator is allowed in GS Mains), and expensive goods in your carry bag to the exam hall. Commission is not responsible for loss of such things, clearly say the UPSC rules. And you don't want to invite disciplinary action or get banned by the UPSC for infringement of rules.
- **You know your Exam Centre, right?** Be absolutely sure you know your exam centre. It does happen that there are many exam venues in the same area which could be confusing especially when they have similar names such as the NP Girls School and NP Bengali Girls School (both at Gole Market, Delhi). It is good to google your centre days before the exam and call the school administration for clarity if needed. And verify the venue of examination the moment you arrive.
- UPSC rules say, *"Orthopedically / Visually Impaired candidates, who have opted for their own scribe, may note that their own scribe will be allowed for the exam only with a **separate e-Admit Card** for such scribe. The e-Admit Cards for the own scribes will be issued separately."*

A Quick Review

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- You are sleeping early and long enough; you are putting alarm(s) for the morning.
 - You are eating early, and not trying new foods.
 - You are avoiding hyperactive friends, relatives.
 - You have the e-admit card, ID proof, black ball point pen, wallet with enough money ready.
 - You are carrying a wrist watch to exam hall and no IT gadgets or valuable items.
 - You have planned your examday travel (metro, bus, taxi, clothes you wear).
 - You have checked the UPSC website for any update.
 - You know your roll number.
 - You are doubly sure of the examination venue.