Looking to ace your next midterm and upcoming final exams? New research indicates that your choice of leisure activity after each study session could have a big impact on your ability to memorize the material.

Researchers from the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria hypothesized that by engaging in moderate exercise and increasing one’s physical stress, cortisol levels will be elevated and will trigger the brain to store information. In the study, 60 men aged 16-29 were asked to learn a range of material, from studying a route on a city map to memorizing word pairs. They were then split into three groups: one group played Counter-Strike, a first-person shooter video game, one group went for a run and the final control group spent time outside.

The results showed that the group of runners performed best, remembering more after the run than before. Those in the control group fared slightly worse, and the memories of people who played the game were significantly impaired.

So, if you’re ready for a break after a few hours of cramming, you’re much better off grabbing your running shoes than a game controller.

References
